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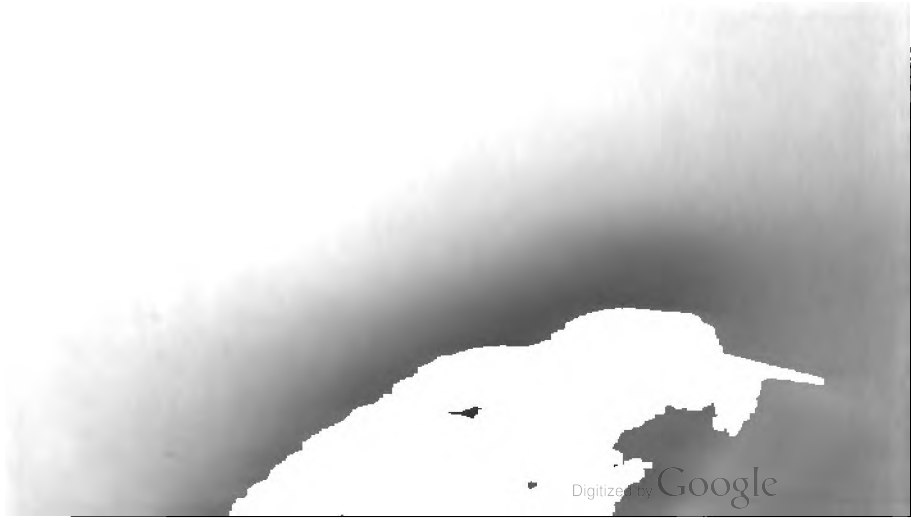
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THE ROMISH

WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.

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THE WORSHIP

OF THE

BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

IN THE CHURCH OF ROME

CONTRARY TO HOLY SCRIPTURE,

AND TO

THE FAITH AND PRACTICE OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST THROUGH THE FIRST FIVE CENTURIES.

James
By J. ENDELL TYLER, B.D.,
RECTOR OF ST. GILES IN THE FIELDS,
AND FORMERLY FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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DUTIFUL AND AFFECTIONATE SERVANT,

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RICHARD

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INTRODUCTION.

The Author of the following treatise has been long accustomed to rank the Worship of the Virgin Mary among the greatest of those impediments which keep asunder the Reformed Church of England and the present Church of Rome. Ardently as every true Christian must long for the establishment of harmony and peace, and for the interchange of the various offices of brotherly love, among all members of Christ's Church, he cannot hope to see the realization of his desire with respect to these two Churches so long as that wide gulf remains to separate them. A Church which acknowledges no object of religious worship except the Almighty alone, and recognises no mediator between God and man except only the Lord Jesus Christ, cannot, without a compromise of principle, hold the full communion of Christian worship with another Church which confesses the Virgin Mary to be the ground of a Christian's hope, which offers supplications to her for her intercession, and prays to her for her protection, guidance, and succour; which addresses prayers to the Supreme Being

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through her, and in her name, as mediator; and renders religious praises to her as the fountain and living spring of mercy, of grace, and of all consolation, acknowledging her to be Queen of heaven and Sovereign Mistress of the world.

Recent events seem to confirm us greatly in this view; pointing to the worship of Mary in the Church of Rome as the chief practical barrier between members of the two Churches. To many a wavering spirit has the Church of Rome held out her own communion as the sure, and the only sure, place of refuge, where spiritual doubts cease from troubling, and misgivings have no place; where implicit faith in an infallible guide bids defiance to every assailant, and suffers no disturbing thought to arise, converting the present life of perplexity into a state of tranquillity and peace. Various as are the counteracting causes to prevent the fulfilment of such expectations, none, we are told, are so generally operative, or so insurmountable to a mind that has habitually made God the sole object of prayer, and the Son of God the sole Mediator, as the worship of the blessed Virgin.

Be this as it may; as members of the Church of England, separated from the errors of Rome, and anathematized by Rome in consequence of that separation, it well becomes us to ascertain calmly and patiently, first, whether what we allege against Rome does in very deed exist in her and belong to her? and, in the next place, whether that, whatever it be, is so contrary to the doctrine of our Saviour and his

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Apostles, and so inconsistent with the teaching and practice of the Church in her earliest and purest ages, as to require such a separation?

These two points it is the main object of the present treatise to ascertain and establish.

With that view, the author endeavours, first, to shew from authentic documents, and without exaggeration, what has been, and what still is, the teaching and practice of the Church of Rome as to the worship of the Virgin. He has searched diligently into her authorized and prescribed formularies; into the works of her canonized saints and accredited teachers; and into the devotional exercises provided for her members, with more or less of public sanction attached to them, and still in common use. He then proceeds to another inquiry, and proves that such a system, so far from having its foundation in Holy Scripture, is directly at variance with the teaching of the Book of inspired truth; and, in confirmation of the conclusions which the study of that volume forces upon the mind, he appeals to the faith, and teaching, and practice of the primitive Church through the first five centuries. In this department of his undertaking he can fearlessly say that he has not wittingly neglected a single genuine work, or a single passage in any genuine work, of the writers of those times, which could throw light on the subject of his inquiry. He has not only examined, without any conscious partiality, into the evidence to which the Roman Catholic advocates for the worship of Mary have appealed, but he has also him-

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self searched with diligence for any other testimony which may exist of each author's habitual sentiments, and even incidental expressions and indirect references, bearing on the point at issue. On putting the various testimonies together, he acknowledges that the result has been no less surprising than satisfactory to himself, as a Catholic Christian protesting against the errors of the Church of Rome.

No single remark of any of these writers leads us to infer that the worship of the Virgin was known in their times. On the contrary, their silence, and that often on occasions when their silence is inconsistent with their possessing knowledge on the subject, proves them to have been unconscious of any such doctrine and practice as now prevail in the Church of Rome. But besides this, which may be called negative evidence, we find many of the most venerable Fathers of the Church, in their comments on the passages of Scripture which record the actions of the Virgin, directly charging her with errors and failings totally irreconcileable with the present doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome.* Indeed, a collection of these comments would form a catena of interpretation of passages of Scripture as harmonious, consistent, au-

* e. g. See Tertullian, p. 145 and 146 of this volume.
Origen, p. 151.
Basil, p. 206.
Ambrose, p. 251.
Chrysostom, p. 269.
Theodoret, p. 329.
Cyril of Alexandria, p. 342.

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thoritative, and Catholic, perhaps, as could be collected on any one subject whatever from the writers of the same period. It is also worthy of remark, that the spurious writings ascribed to these Fathers, writings, the date of which cannot with any reason be referred to a period earlier than the seventh century, most remarkably abound, on the other hand, with ascriptions of power, and mercy, and glory, to the Virgin, declarations of implicit belief in her influence and intercession, and prayers to her for temporal and spiritual blessings; whilst for any traces of such ascriptions, declarations, and prayers, their genuine works will be searched in vain.*

With humble confidence the Author would invite all who call themselves Christians to examine and sift the evidence, and to try the momentous question for themselves; the issue joined between the two Churches being this, Whether the worship of the blessed Virgin Mary in the Church of Rome be not contrary to the teaching of Holy Scripture, and to the faith and practice of the Church of Christ for five hundred years and more.

* See St. Ignatius, p. 370.
Methodius, p. 156.
Athanasius, p. 165.
Gregory Thaumaturgus, p. 370.
Gregory of Nazianzum, p. 217, 218, 375, 378.
Ephraim Syrus, p. 226.
Chrysostom, p. 370.
Augustine, p. 370.
Cyril of Alexandria, p. 384.
Pope Leo, p. 350.
See also, "Acts of Mary, the Egyptian," Appendix, p. 387.

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If this point be settled; if the written word of God cannot be alleged in support of the system upheld and propagated by the Church of Rome, but is in its general bearing contrary to it; and if the teaching and example of the primitive Church through five hundred years be also contrary to the doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome, probably few unprejudiced minds will acquiesce in the solution which there appears at the present day among the advocates of that system a growing inclination to put forward and maintain—THE DOCTRINE, as it is called, of DEVELOPMENT. The Almighty, they allege, did not impart to mankind the whole truth in all its fulness at the first preaching of the Gospel, but bequeathed to his Church the privilege of deriving from him and communicating to the world successive revelations of essential doctrine. Consequently (they proceed to argue) it is not enough to shew that a tenet is not found in Scripture, nor even in the early Church, to warrant its rejection. It may, they say, have pleased God to reveal it in his own good time; and of the reality of that revelation the Church is the only judge: from her there lies no appeal.

This is no new doctrine, though after ages of desuetude it has recently been revived. Not for the first time now is recourse had to the perversion of a principle which is in itself, and in its legitimate application, sound and valuable. We find the abuse of the true doctrine censured in early days; and it well becomes us to be on our guard against the return and prevalence of that

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abuse. We hold it to be sound doctrine to maintain that just as an individual member of Christ's Church, however firmly rooted and grounded in the faith, should still daily increase in knowledge, no less than in the spirit of obedience, more and more, so may the Church itself receive from age to age further and clearer developments of the truth; but then the development in each case must be a further development of the truth as it is in Jesus,—the same truth which is announced to the world in the written word of God,—the same truth which was once delivered to the saints. If ever a doctrine or practice be promulgated at variance with the tenor of Holy Scripture and primitive Christian worship, that doctrine or that practice carries with it its own condemnation; proving itself to have derived its origin, not from the well-head of truth, but from the deceitfulness of superstition or misbelief. Indeed, this same doctrine of development has been employed to countenance the wildest novelties of unbridled fanaticism, and cannot fail to open a door for the admission among our most sacred truths of all the errors which ignorance, superstition, or mistaken zeal or fraud, may devise and spread. But on this subject the Author needs not to dwell in his own words; the same perversion and misapplication of the sound principle of SPIRITUAL PROGRESS was attempted in early times, and was then most ably exposed and refuted by one whose maxims on the authority of tradition have of late been very often cited as principles from which there is no appeal. Vincentius Lirinensis thus records his doc-

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trine, that while Churches and individual Christians ought ever to be in a state advancing towards perfection in knowledge, faith, and practice, yet no one, whether Church or individual, has a right, under colour of further development, to graft upon the ancient faith new doctrines not warranted in Holy Scripture.

In his work called "Commonitorium," dilating on St. Paul's charge to Timothy, "Keep what is committed unto thee," among other suggestions, Vincentius says, "What is meant by that which is committed? That which is intrusted to thee, not what has been invented by thee; what thou hast received, not what thou hast devised; an affair, not of ingenuity, but of learning; not of private adoption, but of public tradition; a thing brought to thee, not brought out by thee; in which thou must be, not an author, but a keeper; not an originator, but a pursuer; not leading, but following. What was before believed more obscurely, let that from thy exposition be understood more clearly. Let posterity rejoice in understanding through thee, what past ages, without understanding, revered. Nevertheless, those same things which thou didst learn, do thou teach in such a way as that thou teach no new doctrine, though thou teach in a new manner."

"But," continues Vincentius, "perhaps some one will say, 'Is there, then, in the Church of Christ no progress?' Surely there is. Let there be a progress, even the greatest. Who would be so envious to man, so hateful to God, as to attempt to hinder it? Yet it

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must be in such sort as to be in good truth a PROGRESS in the faith, not a CHANGE of it. Of progress it is the property that the thing itself should be augmented; of change it is the property that there be an alteration from one thing to another. Therefore the understanding, the science, the wisdom should increase, and be made greatly and strenuously progressive, as well in individuals, as in all collectively; as well in the successive stages of a man's life, as in the advances of the ages and times of the whole Church: but it must be only in one kind, IN THE SAME DOCTRINES, IN THE SAME SENSE, IN THE SAME TENET."*

Now, we believe that to offer prayers to God in the name and through the mediation and intercession of the Virgin Mary, and to offer prayers to her, whether for her intercession, or for her good offices as the dispenser of God's gifts, and as a mediator between God and man, are "new inventions," — not the ancient doctrines of Christianity, but devices superadded to the original truths of salvation; and withal directly repugnant to the Word of God, and the faith and practice of our fathers in the primitive Church. We, moreover, maintain, that if the Roman Church does offer prayer to God through the mediation and intercession of the Virgin Mary, and does present supplications to her for her intercession, or for the gifts of spiritual and temporal graces; and if these religious acts are proved to be contrary to the plain teaching and spirit of Holy Scripture, and to the faith and practice of the

* Oxford, 1836, p. 53.

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Church through five hundred years; then no doctrine of DEVELOPMENT, even in its widest sense, can cover them: for (to adopt the language of some modern casuists) these are not latent doctrines and latent practices now at length enucleated, whilst the germ of them always existed; they are not tenets long since, and from the first, really though unconsciously held by the Church; they are in their very nature contrary to the principles of the Gospel, to the teaching of the Apostles, and to the faith and practice of the Church in its best and purest times: and of these antagonist principles we must discard the one or the other; we must either reject the Scriptures and the early Church, or we must remain separate from Rome, in so far as Rome is the teacher of such errors.

On the title of the present work it seems desirable to offer a few words in this place, to prevent any misunderstanding of the principles and of the subject of our inquiry. The word "worship" is now said to admit of various significations; sometimes implying merely the respect which one human being may entertain towards another, and sometimes meaning the highest religious and divine honour which a creature can render to the Supreme Lord of the universe: consequently we are warned not to charge the Romanists with a spiritual offence in paying "worship" to a creature, but rather to attach to their word "worship" those ideas only which what they say and do naturally and plainly suggests; the same warning

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equally applying to the word "adoration." In the justice of this sentiment we acquiesce; and, in one point of view, the whole of the first part of the following treatise is occupied, it is hoped, in a dispassionate inquiry into the very nature and kind of worship which is actually offered to the Virgin Mary in the Church of Rome.

In pursuing this subject honestly and reverently, we surely need not lie under the suspicion of assuming that the cause of the Son of God is to be promoted, and his mediatorship and honour exalted, by decrying the worth and dignity of his mother. This, we are told,* has been assumed. But whoever may be the persons involved in that charge, they cannot certainly be enlightened members of our communion. No true son of the Reformed Church of England can speak disparagingly or irreverently of the blessed Virgin Mary. Were such an one found in our ranks, we should say of him, that he knows not what spirit he is of. Our Church, in her liturgy, her homilies, her articles, and in the works of her standard divines and most approved teachers, ever speaks of Saint Mary the blessed Virgin in the language of reverence, affection, and gratitude. She was a holy Virgin and a holy mother, "highly favoured," "blessed among women." The Lord was with her, and she was the earthly parent of the only Saviour of mankind. She was herself blessed, and blessed was the fruit of her womb. Should any one entertain a wish to interrupt the testimony of every succeeding age, and to check the continuous ful-

* See Dr. Wiseman's Lectures, vol. ii. p. 92.

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filment of her own prophecy, "All generations shall call me blessed," the Church of England would not acknowledge that wish to be the legitimate and genuine desire of one of her own members.

But when we are required either to address our supplications to the Virgin Mary, and to offer prayers to God through her mediation and intercession, or else to protest against the errors of our fellow-Christians who

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THE

WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY IN THE CHURCH OF ROME.

PART I.

PRESENT WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.

CHAPTER I.

AUTHORIZED AND ENJOINED WORSHIP.

SECTION I.

THE worship of the Virgin Mary in the Church of Rome may be conveniently examined under the following heads:

First, prayers offered to the Almighty in her name, for her merits, through her mediation, advocacy, and intercession.

Secondly, prayers to herself, beseeching her to employ her good offices of intercession with the Eternal Father, and with her Son, in behalf of her petitioners.

Thirdly, prayers to her for her protection from all evils, spiritual and bodily; for her guidance and aid, and for the influences of her grace.

To which must be added the ascription of divine praises to her, in pious acknowledgment of her attributes of power, wisdom, goodness, and mercy, and of her exalted state above all the spirits of life and glory in heaven; and for her share in the redemption of

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the world, and the benefits conferred by her on the individual worshipper.*

Our examination into the worship of the Virgin under these several heads will be most properly and most satisfactorily carried on by first considering the prescribed services and authorized formularies of the Church of Rome in her Missals and Breviaries. In these documents, undoubtedly, we do not find the same astonishing excesses of unqualified divine worship as offer themselves in the works of her canonized saints and accredited teachers, and in the devotional books still in general use among her members; but we find the same principles, which are only expanded, and amplified, and carried out (as it is called) to their full development by other hands. Indeed, the impression will scarcely fail to be made on every reflecting mind, after a general survey of the worship of the Virgin under its various aspects, that however lamentable may be those extravagant excesses into which the votaries of the Virgin Mary have run, yet there are few, perhaps none, of their unequivocal ascriptions of divine homage to her which they may not justify by an appeal to the authorized Ritual of the Church of Rome.

SECTION II.

Under the first head the Roman Missal and Breviary supply an abundant store of examples, some more than others encroaching on the mediatorial office of the Son of God, the one Mediator between God and man. To establish the fact, indeed, one or two

* This ascription of divine praises to the Virgin pervades all parts of her worship.

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instances would be sufficient; but, beyond this, the constant and incessant recourse to the same advocacy of the Virgin cannot but suggest the painful idea of a want of confidence in the sole mediation of our Lord himself, or a want of sure reliance on his promise, that God will not reject any one, however humble or unworthy, who comes to Him by his Son.

In the Post-communion on the day of the Assumption this prayer is offered: "We, partakers of the heavenly board, implore thy clemency, O Lord our God, that we, who celebrate the Assumption of the Mother of God, may by HER INTERCESSION be freed from all impending evils. Through."

The following are varieties of the same addresses to the Throne of Grace:

"We beseech Thee, O Lord, let the glorious intercession of the blessed and glorious ever Virgin Mary protect us and bring us to life eternal. Through the Lord." *

"Pardon, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the offences of thy servants, that we, who cannot please Thee of our own acts, may be saved by the intercession of the Mother of thy Son, our Lord, who liveth with Thee." †

On the vigil of the Epiphany this prayer is offered at the Mass: "Let this communion, O Lord, purge us from guilt, and by the intercession of the blessed Virgin, Mother of God, let it make us partakers of the heavenly cure."

To which may be added the following:

* Vern. clv. — The references to Vern., Æst., Aut., Hiem., are made to the Roman Breviary published at Norwich, with the Pope's approbation, by the Rev. F. C. Husenbeth, in the year 1830, in four volumes, containing the services of the four quarters of the year.

† Vern. clxix.

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"Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord God, that we thy servants may enjoy perpetual health of body and mind, and by the glorious intercession of the blessed Mary ever Virgin be freed from present sorrow, and enjoy eternal gladness. Through the Lord."*

"O God, who hast granted to mankind the rewards of eternal life by the fruitful virginhood of the blessed Mary, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may have experience of her intercession, through whom we were deemed worthy to obtain our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son, as the author of life, who liveth with Thee." †

"O God, who didst deign to choose the virgin palace of the blessed Mary wherein to dwell, grant, we beseech Thee, that Thou mayest make us, being protected by her defence, joyfully present in her commemoration, Thou who livest and reignest with God the Father."‡

"By the Virgin-Mother may the Lord grant us salvation and peace." §

"By the prayers and merits of the blessed Mary ever Virgin, and all saints, may the Lord bring us to the kingdom of heaven." ||

On the second Sunday after Easter we find in the service of the Mass a still more lamentable departure from true Christian worship, where the Church of Rome declares that the offerings made to God at the Lord's Supper were made for the honour of the Virgin: "Having received, O Lord, these helps of our salvation, grant, we beseech Thee, that by the patronage of the blessed Mary ever Virgin, we may be everywhere protected, IN VENERATION OF WHOM ¶ we have made these offerings to thy Majesty."

* Vern. cxlvi. † Vern. clxvii. ‡ Vern. clxv.
§ Vern. cxlviii. || Vern. cxlvii. ¶ In cujus veneratione.

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To cite only one more example under this head: On the octave of Easter in the Secret, at the Mass, the intercession of the Virgin is made to appear as essential a cause of our peace and blessedness as is the propitiation of Christ; or rather, the two are represented as joint concurrent causes, as though the office of the Saviour himself were confined to propitiation, exclusive altogether of intercession, and the office of intercession were assigned to the Virgin: "By THY PROPITIATION, O Lord, and by the INTERCESSION of the blessed MARY ever Virgin, may this offering be profitable to us for our perpetual and present prosperity and peace."

SECTION III.

The second head embraces instances of a still further departure from Christian truth and primitive worship, when the prayer is no longer addressed only to God, but is offered to the Virgin herself, imploring her to intercede for her supplicants, yet still asking nothing beyond her intercession. The Breviaries so abound with these prayers throughout as to make any selection difficult:

"Blessed Mother, Virgin undefiled, glorious Queen of the world, intercede for us with the Lord.* Blessed Mother of God, Mary, perpetual Virgin, the Temple of the Lord, the Holy Place of the Holy Spirit, thou alone without example hast pleased our Lord Jesus Christ: pray for the people, mediate for the clergy, intercede for the female sex who are under a vow." †

In the form of prayer called *Litaniæ Lauritanæ*, between the most solemn prayers addressed to the ever-blessed Trinity, and to the Lamb of God that

* Autum. cxlviii. † Vern. clxiii.

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taketh away the sin of the world, more than forty addresses to the Virgin are inserted, invoking her under as many varieties of title: "Holy Mother of God, pray for us. Mirror of Justice, Cause of our Joy, Mystical Rose, Tower of David, Tower of Ivory, House of Gold, Ark of the Covenant, Gate of Heaven, Refuge of Sinners, Queen of Angels, Queen of All Saints, &c., pray for us." *

The following invocation seems to stand midway between these appeals to the Virgin merely for her intercession, and direct prayers to her for blessings, temporal and spiritual, at her own hands; it will therefore be more safe to cite it under this head.

"Hail, O Queen, Mother of Mercy, our Life, Sweetness, and Hope, hail. To thee we sigh, groaning and weeping in this valley of tears. Come then, our Advocate, turn those compassionate eyes of thine on us; and after this exile shew to us Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb, O merciful! O pious! O sweet Virgin Mary!

"Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, that we may be rendered worthy of the promises of Christ." †

SECTION IV.

But, unhappily for Christian truth, in the appointed Roman Ritual we find repeated examples of prayer addressed directly to the Virgin for benefits at her hand, spiritual and temporal, without any reference to her prayers, without specifying that her petitions are all that the supplicant seeks. It is no reasonable answer to affirm, that all intended in these forms is to ask for her advocacy and intercession; the mass of the people

* Vern. ccxxxix. † Æst. 151.

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will not, do not, cannot regard it in that light. It is asserted, (as for example by Cardinal du Perron,*) that when the Church of Rome guides and directs her sons and daughters thus to pray, without any limitation, for specific benefits at the hands of the Virgin-Mother, they are not taught to look for the blessings as her gifts, and at her own disposal; but that the words "by praying for us" are always to be understood. That this however is practically not so, we shall have too plain evidence when we come to examine the full development of the Virgin's worship in the works of divines, and in the present practice of the people. And can it be right and safe to lay such snares for the conscience? If her prayers are the sole object of the petitioner's invocation, why set him, in the solemn services of the Church, an example of prayers which make no allusion to her intercession, but ask as directly and unequivocally for her aid and blessing, as the supplications addressed to the Supreme Being ask for his? In an act, of all human acts the most solemn and holy, can recourse be had to such refined distinctions and subtleties, without awful and imminent spiritual danger?† Among many other invocations of a similar

* Réplique à la Rep. du Roy de la G. Brétagne. Paris, 1620, p. 970.

† In weighing the import of these addresses, we look especially to the nature of the boon for which the petitioner supplicates, and we find it often a gift which God alone can bestow, and which He has promised to grant to all who seek it at his hand in the name of his blessed Son. The refinement of Bellarmin and others seems still more subtle, and practically unintelligible to the large body of worshippers. In order to avoid the objection against the invocation of saints, that of necessity it implies omnipresence, they have recourse to the assumption, for which neither Scripture nor reason suggests any colour of argument, that God himself, hearing the prayer addressed to a saint, com-

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character this frequently recurs, "Deem me worthy to praise thee, O hallowed Virgin; give to me strength against thy enemies." *

The following seems to be among the most favourite addresses to the Virgin:

"Hail, Star of the Sea, and kind Mother of God, and ever Virgin! happy Gate of Heaven! taking that 'Hail' from the mouth of Gabriel; do thou establish us in peace, changing the name of Eve. Do thou for the accused loose their bonds, for the blind bear forth a light, drive away our evils, demand for us all good things. SHEW THAT THOU ART A MOTHER. Let Him who endured for us to be thy Son through thee receive our prayers. O excellent Virgin, meek among all, DO THOU MAKE US MEEK AND CHASTE, FREED FROM FAULT; make our life pure, prepare for us a safe journey, that, beholding Jesus, we may always rejoice together. Praise be to God the Father, glory to Christ most high, and to the Holy Ghost: one honour to the Three. Amen."

In the body of this hymn there is reference undoubtedly to an application to be made to the Son; but can it be fitting that such sentiments, as are here suggested to the Virgin for her to entertain, should exist in any created being towards God? Can such a call upon her to shew her power and influence over the eternal Son of the eternal Father be fitting in the hearts and in the mouths of us, poor sinners, for whom He left his Father's glory, and came down on earth to die. "Shew that thou art a mother." We are aware

municates a knowledge of it to that saint, and then receives back from him the prayer of the human petitioner.

* Æst. clvi. Æst. cxxxvi.

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that, in later times, some versions of the hymn* have translated this passage as though the prayer to Mary was, that she would by her maternal good offices in our behalf prove to us that she is OUR mother. We rejoice to see any such indication of a feeling of impropriety in the sentiment in its plain and obvious meaning: but the change is inadmissible; for not only is it contrary to the whole drift, and plain sense, and meaning of the passage, but it is altogether at variance with the interpretation put upon it both before and since the Reformation. In the second line she is addressed as the MOTHER of God; the Lord Jesus is immediately mentioned in the very next line, and through the entire stanza, as her Son; and the prayer is, that through her that Being, who endured to be her Son, would hear the prayers of the worshippers: and this obvious grammatical and logical meaning, "Shew thyself to be HIS mother," is the sense attached to it, not incidentally, but of set purpose before the Reformation. In a work† dedicated to the "Youth of

* "Faites voir que vous êtes véritablement notre mère." Nouveau Recueil de Cantiques, p. 353.— In the English book called The Prince of Wales' Manual (1688) the lines are thus rendered:

"Shew us a mother's care:
To Him convey our prayer,
Who for our sake put on
The title of thy Son."

It is curious to find that in the present day both these senses are attached to the phrase. The Bishop of Friburg, 1832, thus addresses Mary: "Mother of the Saviour God, and our own, shew that you are both the one and the other—Monstra te esse matrem—and cause us to experience the sweet effects of your POWER AND your motherly goodness." [Mariolatry, p. 118. Piller, Imprimeur de l'Evêché.]

† This work was printed by the famous W. de Worde, at the sign of the Sun, in Fleet Street, 1508; and the passage occurs in p. 33, b.

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Great Britain studious of good morals," and written expressly for the purpose of explaining these parts of the Ritual according to the use of Sarum, the interpretation put on this passage is thus expressed, "Shew thyself to be A MOTHER, that is, by APPEASING THY SON; and let thy Son take our prayers through thee, who endured for us miserable sinners to be thy Son." In the English Primer of our Lady, (of which a MS. copy is now in the Rectory of Draycot, near Stone,) the verse is thus rendered:

Shew thyself to be a mother,
So that He accept our petition,
Which for our sake, before all other,
Was contented to be thy Son.

Nor can any other meaning be attached to the translation of the words, as given by Cardinal du Perron in the passage * above referred to. The other interpretation does not appear to have had a place in any one book of former days. It is impossible not to see in this the prototype, in softened colours, of Bonaventura's broad and shocking summons of the Virgin, to exert her maternal authority and command her Son, "By the right of a mother command thy Son."

Another prayer in the Breviary runs thus: "Under thy protection we take refuge, Holy Mother of God. Despise not our supplications in our necessities; but

This is by no means the only book of the kind: one is printed at Basle, and another at Cologne, in 1504. They are evidently drawn from some common source, but are not copies of the same work. The Cologne edition tells us, it was the reprint of a familiar commentary on the hymns, printed long ago.

* "Monstre quetues mère, reçoive par toy nos prières Celuy, qui né pour nous a eu agreeable d'être tien."

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from all dangers do thou ever deliver us, O glorious and blessed Virgin." *

Let us suppose the object of these addresses to be changed; and, instead of the Virgin, let us substitute the name of the ever-blessed God most high, the eternal Father of us all, and we shall find the very words here addressed to the Virgin offered to Him, and spoken of Him in some of the most affecting prayers and praises recorded in the Bible.†

But another hymn in the office of the Virgin ad-

* Æst. cxlvi.

† The identity of the prayers offered to the Virgin with those offered, either in the words of inspiration or in the Roman Ritual, to the Almighty Himself, becomes very striking, if we lay the prayers to the Virgin side by side with the original language of the Roman Liturgy, and the only translation of the Scriptures authorized by that Church: and it is an identity (as may be seen in this hymn and the hymn next cited) not in the form only, but in the substance of the prayers offered and the grace sought.

In the Roman Ritual the Virgin is thus addressed:	In the same Ritual, or in the Bible, the Almighty is addressed thus:
Sub tuum præsidium *confugimus;*	Domine, firmamentum meum et refugium meum, ad te *confugi.*—Ps. xvii. 1. cxlii. 11.
Nostras *deprecationes* ne *despicias* in necessitatibus.	Ne despexeris deprecationem meam.—Ps. liv. 1.
Sed a *periculis cunctis libera* nos.	*Libera*, Domine, animam servi tui ab *omnibus periculis* inferni. Hiem. ccvi.
	Libera nos a malo. Lord's Prayer.
	A periculo mortis libera nos, Domine.—Hiem. cciv.
Tu nos ab hoste protege.	Eripe me de inimicis meis, Domine.—Ps. cxliii. 1.
Et horâ mortis suscipe.	Suscipe, Domine, servum tuum. Hiem. ccvi.

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dressed in part to the Saviour himself, and partly to the Virgin Mary, is to us still more revolting. The Redeemer is only asked to remember his mortal birth; no blessing is here sought at his hands in prayer; his protection is not the subject of the petition; no deliverance of our souls at the hour of death is sought from Him; for these blessings, and these divine mercies, supplication is made exclusively to the Virgin. Can such a mingled prayer, can such a contrast in prayer, be the genuine fruit of that Gospel which invites and commands us to seek in prayer to God for all we need of temporal and eternal good, in the name and for the sake of his blessed Son?

"O Author of our salvation, remember that once, being born of a spotless Virgin, Thou didst take the form of our body. O Mary, Mother of Grace, Mother of Mercy, do thou protect us from the enemy, and receive us at the hour of death. Glory to Thee, O Lord, who wast born of a Virgin, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, through eternal ages. Amen."

SECTION V.

We must now refer to another example of the practice of the Church of Rome in her authorized and prescribed Ritual. The Rubric of the Common Prayer of the Church of England directs that at the end of every psalm, throughout the year, shall be repeated "Glory be to the Father," &c. In the Roman Breviary also we find this Rubric: "This verse *Gloria* is always said at the end of all psalms, except it be other-

* Æst. cxlv. There is another reading of this hymn, but it does not affect the sense.

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wise noted."* The object proposed from of old by the Christian Church in concluding each psalm by an ascription of glory to the eternal Trinity, seems to have been to lead the worshipper to apply the psalm in its spirit to the work of our salvation, accomplished by the three blessed Persons in the Godhead. The Church of Rome by substituting, instead of the "Gloria," anthems in praise of the Virgin (on the feast of her Assumption, for example), does all that can be done to fix the thoughts of the worshipper on Mary, and to apply the spirit of the psalm to her; a practice which sanctions the excesses into which Bonaventura and others have run in their departures from the purity and integrity of primitive worship. In some cases the anthem to the Virgin is so interwoven with the psalm as to render the insertion of the "Gloria" between them, at the very least, unnatural and forced: and where that is not the case,—where the Gloria might be inserted,—the annexation of the anthem has a tendency to seduce the thoughts of the worshipper from the truths contained in the inspired psalm, and to fix them upon Mary and her asserted Assumption; changing the Church's address from the Eternal Being alone invoked by the Psalmist, to one who, though a virgin blessed among women, is a creature of God's hand. On comparing, however, the Office of the Assumption and the "Lesser Office of the Virgin," we cannot but infer that, in the former, the *Gloria* was intended to be altogether omitted; because in the latter, though there are similar anthems to the Virgin annexed to several psalms, the *Gloria* is inserted between them. This would, indeed, be some degrees worse; but in

* Æst. 3.

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either case the practice is truly deplorable. We need only cite one or two examples. At the conclusion of the 8th psalm, we find two anthems annexed thus: "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the world."—Ant. "The Holy Mother of God is exalted above the choir of angels to the heavenly realms. The gates of Paradise are opened to us by thee,* [O Virgin,] who gloriest this day triumphant with the angels."

Thus, to the last verse of the 95th, (in the Hebrew and English versions the 96th,) an anthem is immediately appended:

"He shall judge the earth in equity, and the people with his truth."—Ant. "Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, Thou alone hast destroyed all heresies in the whole world. Deem me worthy to praise thee, hallowed Virgin. Give me strength against thy enemies."

In the 86th (87th) psalm, the anthem is so interwoven with the psalm as to exclude the probability of any intention to insert the *Gloria* between them. The Vulgate translation of the last verse differs entirely from the English, but without affecting the argument. "As the habitation of all who rejoice is in Thee. As the habitation of all US who rejoice is in THEE, Holy Mother of God."

Cardinal du Perron argues, that at the altar, in the office of the Mass, prayer is not made directly to any saint, but only obliquely, the address being made always to God. But if, in other parts of the service, prayers are offered directly to the Virgin, it is difficult to see what is gained by such a plea. Surely it is trifling in things concerning the soul, to make such

* Quæ gloriosa.

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distinctions. If, for example, priests about to officiate can address a prayer directly to the Virgin FOR HER ASSISTANCE, that she would stand by them, and BY HER GRACE enable them to offer a worthy sacrifice, how does this become a less direct prayer to her, because it is not repeated during the service of the Mass? Such pleas seem to intimate a kind of misgiving, in those who make them, as to the lawfulness of any addresses of the kind. The following is called, in the Roman Breviary, "A Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary before the celebration of the Mass;" and is immediately followed by another, called "A Prayer to the Male or Female Saint* whose feast is celebrated on that day," from whose merits the priest professes to derive his confidence, and to whose honour and glory he declares that he offers the holy Sacrament.

"O Mother of pity and mercy, most Blessed Virgin Mary, I a miserable and unworthy sinner flee to thee with my whole heart and affection; and I pray thy sweetest pity, that as thou didst stand by thy sweetest Son upon the cross, so thou wouldest vouchsafe of thy clemency to stand by me a miserable priest, and by all priests, who here and in all the holy Church offer Him this day, that AIDED BY THY GRACE we may be enabled to offer a worthy and acceptable victim in the sight of the most high and undivided Trinity. Amen."

"O Holy One, [Sancte vel Sancta,] behold, I a miserable sinner, DERIVING CONFIDENCE FROM THY MERITS, now offer the most holy Sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ FOR THY HONOUR AND GLORY. I humbly and devoutly pray thee that thou wouldest deign to intercede for me to-day, that I may

* Ad Sanctum, vel Sanctam, &c. Oratio, Hiem. p. ccxxxiii.

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be enabled to offer so great a sacrifice worthily and acceptably, and eternally to praise Him with thee and all his elect, and that I may live with Him for ever."

SECTION VI.

The intention of the author of the present work being to confine himself and his readers closely to one subject, the worship of the Virgin Mary in the Church of Rome, he will not be tempted here to speak on the nature of Indulgences, nor will he make any further comment on the following prayer than seems necessary to convey some knowledge of the circumstances under which it now appears.

The Roman Breviary from which these quotations are made was published in England, with the express authority of the then Pope himself, in the year 1830. Pope Leo X. lived more than three hundred years ago, and yet the following announcement stands at the present day in that Breviary immediately before the Absolutions and Benedictions to be said before the readings in certain Offices: "To those who devoutly recite the following prayer after performing service, Pope Leo X. hath granted indulgence or pardon [indulsit] for defects and faults in celebrating it, contracted by human frailty."

Even were all those distinctions admitted, which are so frequently urged by one body of men, and declared by others to be unsatisfactory and inadmissible, with regard to the different kinds of honour intended to be ascribed to God, and to the Virgin, and the Saints, (corresponding with the Latria, the Hyperdulia, and the Dulia, to which we have already referred,) can such a joint ascription of

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"everlasting praise, honour, and glory from every creature" be safely made, as we find in the following prayers?

"To the most Holy and Undivided Trinity, to the manhood of our crucified Lord Jesus Christ, to the fruitful purity of the most blessed and most glorious ever Virgin Mary, and to the whole body of all the Saints, be everlasting praise, honour, virtue, and glory from every creature, and to us forgiveness of all sins, through the boundless ages of ages. Amen."

"Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary, which bore the Son of the eternal Father." "And blessed are the paps which gave suck to Christ the Lord." "Our Father." "Hail Mary." *

Whatever association may be raised in our minds by the circumstance of such an announcement being published in our own country in the nineteenth century, by which a bishop of Rome in the sixteenth century GRANTED PARDON, (OR INDULGENCE) for faults arising from human frailty to all priests for all ages to come, the subject does not fall immediately within the scope of this treatise. But, surely, to join the Holy Trinity with the Virgin Mary and the entire aggregate of the Saints in one and the same ascription of eternal praise, honour, and glory, is as utterly subversive of primitive worship as it is repugnant to the plainest sense of Scripture, and derogatory to the dignity and majesty of that Supreme Being who will not share his honour with another.†

* Hiem. after the "General Rubrics."

† An attempt has been made to justify this mingled ascription of glory to God, the Virgin, and the Saints, by a reference to that passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, c. xii. v. 22, in which the inspired

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SECTION VII.

Such is the result of our inquiries into the authorized and prescribed forms of worship in the Church of Rome, in every part of the world where the supremacy of that Church is acknowledged. Can it be matter of wonder that individuals high in honour with that Church have carried out those same principles of worship to far greater lengths? The principle should undoubtedly be ever present to our mind, of fixing upon a Church itself only what is to be found in its canons, decrees, and formularies, and authoritative teaching; and of that which directly contravenes the Gospel rule and primitive faith and practice, far more than enough is found in the authorized and prescribed Liturgies of Rome to compel all who adhere to the Gospel and the example of primitive times to withhold their consent from her worship. But, with this principle steadily before us, justice and prudence combined require us to trace for ourselves the practical workings of the system. And, indeed, the deplorable excesses to which priests, bishops, cardinals, and canonized saints have run in the worship of the Virgin Mary, might well induce upright and enlightened Roman Catholics to look anxiously for themselves to their foundations; to determine, with tender caution doubtless and pious care, yet still with an eye bent honestly

writer enumerates indiscriminately those blessed spirits with whom the faithful will be united in heaven, — just men made perfect, angels, the Redeemer, the everlasting Father; but in the only point now under our consideration there is not the shadow of resemblance between the two cases.

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and only on the truth, whether the corruption be not in the well-head? whether the stream do not flow from the very fountain itself already impregnated with the poison? whether the prayers authorized and directed to be offered to the Virgin in public worship be not in very truth at variance with the first principles of the Gospel — faith in one God the Giver of every good, and in one Mediator and Intercessor between God and man, the Lord Jesus himself alone, whose blood cleanseth from all sin? in a word, to weigh well and to reflect, whether all the aberrations of her children in this department of religious duty have not their prototype in the ordinances, the injunctions, the precepts, and practical example of their Church itself? If we look to principles, as we have already observed, it will be hard to find any of the most unequivocal ascriptions of divine worship made to the Virgin Mary by her most zealous votaries, for which those worshippers would not be able to appeal in justification, and not without reason, to the authorized Ritual of the Church of Rome.

Before we proceed to a review of the practical workings of the system, two considerations seem naturally to suggest themselves.

First, If it was really intended that the invocation of the Virgin should be exclusively confined to requests that she would pray and intercede by prayer for her petitioners, why should language be addressed to her which in its plain, obvious, grammatical, and common-sense interpretation conveys the form of direct prayers to her for benefits at her own disposal? And,

Secondly, If the Church of Rome had intended that her members, when they suppliantly invoke the Vir-

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gin Mary and have recourse to her aid, should offer to her direct and immediate prayers that she would grant temporal and spiritual benefits, to be dispensed to mortals on earth at her own will, and by her own authority and power, in that case what words could that Church have prescribed to the petitioners, what expressions could be put into their mouth, which would have conveyed that intention more explicitly and unequivocally than the very words which have been adopted, and sanctioned, and prescribed?

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CHAPTER II.

PUBLIC WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN CONTINUED.

SECTION I.

FEW probably can long be engaged in any wide and varied researches into the actual state of the worship of the Virgin Mary in the Church of Rome, without being surprised at finding the prevalence of such a mass of corruption and error as they had before no conception of. The extraordinary excesses to which that adoration has been carried, not by obscure and illiterate or fanatical individuals, but by celebrated doctors, prelates, and saints, seem to introduce us to another religion, for the very germ even of which we seek in the Gospel in vain. If, indeed, we could with justice regard such palpable instances of the worship of the Virgin, in its most objectionable form, as the marks of ages long past away, and of times less enlightened than our own, we might draw a veil over them, and hide them from our sight, rather than contemplate, in any persons calling themselves by the name of Christ, such departures from primitive truth and worship. But when we find the solemn addresses of the present chief authorities in the Roman Church, nay, the epistles of the Sovereign Pontiff himself, countenancing, cherishing, and encouraging the same superstitions, it is no longer a matter of choice, but it becomes an imperative duty in those who would rescue or preserve the truth from such cor-

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ruptions, to lay bare the facts of the case, without exaggeration and without disguise.

Before we proceed to ascertain from the testimony of men, whose writings are in a measure stamped with authority, the real doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome, one more of the many instances meeting us on every side, which characterize her public worship, seems to require some notice. The service here alluded to appears to take a sort of middle station between the enjoined formularies, and the devotions of individuals, or family worship. On the one hand, it partakes far too much of a public character to be considered in the light of private religious exercises; on the other, it seems to lack that authority which would rank it among the liturgical offices of the Church. The service is performed with more than ordinary ceremony in the churches; a priest presides, the Host is presented to the adoration of the people, and a sermon is preached by an appointed minister: it is performed (in Paris for example) every evening through the entire month of May, and is celebrated expressly in honour of the Virgin; for not only is the Saturday in every week (with some exceptions) dedicated to her, but in every year the month of May is devoted to her, and is called by way of eminence "Mary's month." Temporary altars are raised to her on the occasion, surrounded by flowers and evergreens, and profusely adorned with garlands and drapery; her image usually standing in a conspicuous place before the altar. Societies or guilds are formed chiefly for the celebration of the Virgin's praises, who bear the chief parts in these religious festivities; and in some of the churches the effect both to the eye and to the ear is very imposing, in correspondence with the preparation.

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One thing is wanting—the proper object of Christian worship. A collection of religious poems, published professedly for the fraternities in Paris, and used in the churches there on those occasions, at the close of the preface is dedicated "To the glory of Jesus and of Mary." In this collection many of the hymns are addressed directly and exclusively to the Virgin: some without either a shadow of reference to the Son of God, the only Saviour, or any allusion whatever to the God of Christians.

The following is a literal translation of one of the hymns entire:

"Around the altars of Mary Let us her children press;
To that mother so endeared Let us address the sweetest prayers.
Let a lively and holy mirth Animate us on this holy day,
There exists no sadness For a heart full of her love.
Let us adorn this sanctuary with flowers, Let us deck her revered altars;
Let us redouble our efforts to please her. Be this month consecrated to her.
Let the perfume of these crowns Form a delicious incense,
Which, ascending even to her throne, May carry to her both our hearts and our prayers.
Let the holy name of Mary Be unto us a name of salvation;
Let our softened soul Ever pay to her a sweet tribute of love,
Let us join the choir of angels The more to celebrate her beauty;
And may our songs of praise Resound in eternity.
O holy Virgin! O, our Mother! Watch over us from the height of heaven!
And when, from this sojourn of misery, We present our prayers to you,
O sweet, O divine Mary! Lend an ear to our sighs;
And, after this life, Make us to taste of deathless pleasures."*

In the case of the prescribed prayers of the Church addressed to the Virgin, we have already suggested

* Nouveau Recueil de Cantiques à l'usage des Confréries des Paroisses de Paris. Paris, 1839, p. 175.

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the propriety of trying the real import, the true intent and meaning, and genuine spirit of the address, by substituting the name of the Saviour in place of the Virgin's; and if the same words, without any change of meaning or substance, form a prayer fit to be offered by sinners to the Redeemer of the world, then asking, Can this be right? The application of the same test may most beneficially be made here, as well as in the case of numerous other of the prayers now offered by Roman Catholics to the Virgin. Suppose, instead of making these offerings of prayer, and praise, and self-devotion in the month of May to Mary, they were offered to our blessed Lord on the festival of his Nativity, would they not contain an act of faith in him, as our Saviour and our God?

It is lamentable to find among these hymns striking proof that those corruptions of the faith, which (as we shall immediately see) in former years drew the contrast in favour of the Virgin, and against God, with reference to the attribute of mercy, are fully responded to by her worshippers now. The hymn on the Assumption (p. 183) represents the great and only Potentate, the God of mercy and loving-kindness, as Mary's husband, full of rage and fury, who must be softened by her influence into tenderness and sweetness towards her votaries. The canticle ends with a stanza, here rendered word for word:

"Vouchsafe Mary on this day To hear our sighs,
And to second our desires. Vouchsafe Mary on this day
To receive our incense, our love.

"CALM THE RAGE OF THY HEAVENLY HUSBAND.
Let him shew himself kind To all those that are thine!
Of thy heavenly husband Calm the rage!
Let his heart be softened towards us." *

* P. 183.

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Melancholy as it is to find such expressions coming from the lips of those who profess and call themselves Christians, children of that God whose mercy is as boundless as his power, disciples of Him who invites us to go boldly to the throne of grace ourselves, in the assurance that our heavenly Father loveth us; it must be confessed that the same views present themselves to us on every side, the same corruption seems to have gradually, but at length successfully, pervaded the entire system.

The course of our argument now leads us to examine the works of some among the canonized saints and acknowledged doctors of the Church of Rome.

SECTION II.—BONAVENTURA.

Among the most remarkable monuments of past years are the devotional works of Bonaventura. He was no ordinary man; and the circumstances under which his writings were recommended to the world are indeed memorable. It is difficult to conceive how any Church can give the impress of its own name and approval in a fuller or more unequivocal manner to the productions of any human being, than by the process by which the Church of Rome has stamped her authority on the works of this her canonized saint.

In the "Acta Sanctorum"* it is stated, that Bonaventura was born in 1221, and died in 1274. He was of the order of St. Francis, and passed through all degrees of ecclesiastical dignities, short only of the pontifical throne itself. Pope Clement IV., in 1265, offered to him the Archbishopric of York, which he

* P. 183. Antwerp, 1723; July 14, pp. 811—823.

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refused; but Clement's successor, Gregory X., elevated him to the dignity of Cardinal-Bishop. His biographer expresses his astonishment that the memory of such a man should have so long remained buried with his body, adding that the tardiness of his honours was compensated by their splendour. More than two centuries after his death, his claims to canonization were urged upon Sixtus IV.; and that Pope, in the eleventh year of his reign, invested him with the dignity of a saint. The diploma bears date "xviii Kalend. Maias," i. e. April 14, 1482.

Before a mortal is canonized by the Pope, it is usually required that miracles wrought by him, or upon him, or at his tomb, be proved to the satisfaction of the Roman Court.* We need not dwell on the nature of an inquiry into a matter of fact alleged to have been done by an individual two hundred years before, and whose memory (as his biographer complains) had lain buried with his corpse. In this case, among the miracles specified, it is recorded that on one occasion, when he was filled with awe at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, God, by an angel, took a particle of the consecrated bread from the hands of the priest, and gently placed it in the holy man's mouth. But with these transactions our present purpose does not lead us to interfere, except so far as to ascertain from them the degree of authority with which Bonaventura must be invested by Roman Catholics as a teacher and instructor authorized and appointed by their Church.

The case stands thus:—Pope Sixtus IV. declares in his diploma, that the Proctor of the order of Minors proved, by a dissertation on the passage of St. John,

* See "Acta Sanctorum," as above quoted.

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"There are three that bear record in heaven," that the blessed Trinity had testified to the fact of Bonaventura being a Saint in heaven: the Father proving it by the attested miracles; the Son, by the wisdom of his doctrine; the Holy Spirit, by the excellency of his life. The Pontiff then adds in his own words, "He so wrote on divine subjects, that the HOLY SPIRIT SEEMS TO HAVE SPOKEN IN HIM."* This testimony is referred to by Pope Sixtus V.

The latter Pontiff was crowned May 1, 1585, more than a century after the canonization of Bonaventura, and more than three centuries after his death. By his order the works of Bonaventura were "most carefully emendated." The decretal letters, A.D. 1588, pronounced Bonaventura to be an acknowledged doctor of Holy Church, directing his authority to be cited and employed in all places of education, and in all ecclesiastical discussions and studies. The same act offers plenary indulgence to all who assist at the Mass on his feast in certain specified places, with other minor immunities on the conditions annexed.†

In these documents Bonaventura is called the "Seraphic Doctor;" and the same question presents itself to us again, whether it is possible for any human authority to give a more entire, full, and unreserved sanction to the works of any human being, than the Church of Rome has actually given to the writings of Bonaventura.‡ And what do these works present to us on the invocation and worship of the Virgin Mary?

* P. 831. † P. 837.

‡ The edition of his works here used was published at Mentz in 1609; and the passages referred to occur in vol. vi. between pp. 400 and 500.

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BONAVENTURA'S PSALTER.*

In the first place, taking every one of the 150 psalms singly, Bonaventura so changes the commencement of each, as to address them all, not as the inspired Psalmist did, to the Lord God Almighty, but to the Virgin Mary; interspersing, in some, much of his own composition, and then adding the Gloria Patri to each. It is indeed a painful task to quote any of these perversions of the holy volume of inspired truth; but we dare not turn our eyes from this evil; we must not be deterred from looking it in the face. A few examples, however, will suffice.

In the 30th psalm, "In thee, O Lord, have I trusted, let me not be confounded for ever," &c., the Psalter of the Virgin substitutes these words:

"In thee, O Lady, have I trusted, let me not be confounded for ever: in thy grace take me.

"Thou art my fortitude and my refuge: my consolation, and my protection.

"To thee, O Lady, have I cried, while my heart was in heaviness; and thou didst hear me from the top of the eternal hills.

* It is curious to find the Cardinal du Perron, in his answer to our King James, declaring that he had never met with this Psalter in his life, and was sure it was never written by Bonaventura; alleging that neither Trithemius nor Gesner had mentioned it. The Vatican editors, however, have themselves set that question at rest. They assure us, that they have thrown into the appendix all the works about the genuineness of which there was any doubt, and that Bonaventura wrote many works not mentioned by Trithemius, which they have published from the Vatican press. Of this Psalter there is no doubt. See Cardinal du Perron, Réplique à la Rep. du Roi de Grande Brétagne, Paris, 1620, p. 974.

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"Bring thou me out of the snare, that they have hid for me; for thou art my succour.

"Into thy hands, O Lady, I commend my spirit, my whole life, and my last day."

In the 31st psalm we read, "Blessed are they whose hearts love thee, O Virgin Mary; their sins shall be mercifully blotted out BY THEE."

In the 35th, v. 2. "Incline thou the countenance of God upon us; COMPEL HIM to have mercy upon sinners.* O Lady, thy mercy is in the heaven, and thy grace is spread over the whole earth."

In the 67th, instead of "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered," the Psalter of the Virgin has, "Let Mary arise, and let her enemies be scattered."

In the opening of the 93rd psalm there is a most startling, (we must not disguise our real estimate,) a most impious and blasphemous comparison of the Supreme God with the Virgin Mary, in reference to the very attribute which in HIM shines first, and last, and brightest—His eternal mercy. It draws the contrast in favour of Mary, and against God.

"The Lord is a God of vengeance; but thou, O Mother of mercy, inclinest to be merciful."†

The dearly-valued penitential psalm (129th) is thus addressed to Mary:

"Out of the depths have I called to thee, O Lady; O Lady, hear my voice. Let thine ears be attent to the voice of my praise and glorifying: deliver me from the hand of my enemies; confound their imaginations and attempts against me. Rescue me in the evil day, and in the day of death forget not my soul:

* "COGE illum peccatoribus misereri." † P. 485.

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carry me into the haven of salvation; let my name be enrolled among the just." *

As the penitential psalms are thus turned from Him to whom the inspired pen of the Psalmist addressed them, so are his hymns of praise to Jehovah constrained, through the same channel, to flow to the Virgin; and all nature, in the sea, on the earth, in the heavens, is called upon to praise and glorify Mary. Thus, in the 148th psalm, we read,

"Praise our Lady of Heaven: glorify her in the highest. Praise her all ye men and cattle, ye birds of the heaven, and fishes of the sea. Praise her, sun and moon; ye stars, and circles of the planets. Praise her, Cherubin and Seraphin, thrones, and dominions, and powers. Praise her, all ye legions of angels. Praise her, all ye orders of spirits on high."†

The last sentence of the psalm is thus perverted:

"Let every thing that hath breath praise our Lady."

May God hasten the time when the only reading in Christendom shall again be in the words of the sweet Psalmist of Israel,

"Let every thing that hath breath praise THE LORD."

To this Psalter are annexed various hymns lamentably perverted on the same principle. In one, entitled "A Canticle like that of Habakkuk iii.," Bonaventura not only addresses to the Virgin Mary the words in which that prophet offered his prayer to God, but inserts also the very words in which our Blessed Saviour most solemnly confessed to his Heavenly Father, and with ascriptions of glory (such as God's own book ascribes to God only) addresses them all to the Virgin:

* P. 489. † P. 491.

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Addressed in Holy Scripture to God the Lord Jehovah :*	Addressed by Bonaventura to Mary:
O Lord, I have heard thy report, and was afraid.	O Lady, I have heard thy report, and was astonished.
I confess to thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes.	I will confess to thee, O Lady, because thou hast hid these things from the wise, and hast revealed them to babes.
Thy glory hath covered the heavens.	Thy glory hath covered the heavens, and the earth is full of thy mercy.
The earth is full of the mercy of the Lord.	
Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people; for salvation with thy Christ.	Thou, O Virgin, wentest forth for the salvation of thy people; for salvation with thy Christ.

"O thou blessed one, our salvation is placed in thy hands. Remember our poverty, O thou pious one! WHOM THOU WILLEST, HE SHALL BE SAVED; AND HE FROM WHOM THOU TURNEST AWAY THY COUNTENANCE, GOETH INTO DESTRUCTION."

* The parallels become more striking if we lay, side by side, Bonaventura's words to the Virgin and the Latin version of the Bible, alone of authority in the Church of Rome.

Vulgate:	Bonaventura:
Domine, audivi auditionem tuam, et timui. Hab. iii. 2.	Domina, audivi auditionem tuam, et obstupui.
Confiteor tibi, Pater, Domine cæli et terræ, quia abscondisti hæc a sapientibus et prudentibus et revelasti ea parvulis. S. Matt. xi. 25.	Confitebor tibi, Domina, quia abscondisti hæc a sapientibus, et revelasti ea parvulis.
Operuit cælos gloria ejus. Hab. iii. 3.	Operuit cælos gloria tua.
Misericordiâ Domini plena est terra.—Ps. xxxii. 5.	Et misericordiâ tuâ plena est terra.
Egressus es in salutem populi tui; in salutem cum Christo tuo. Hab. iii. 13.	Egressa es, Virgo, in salutem populi tui; in salutem cum Christo tuo.

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The Song of the Three Children is altered in the same manner; and both in it, and in the Canticle of Zacharias, these prayers are introduced:

"O Mother of mercy, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners, who neglect to repent of our past sins, and every day commit many to be repented of."

THE TE DEUM.

The Te Deum is thus miserably distorted:

"We praise thee, Mother of God; we acknowledge thee, Mary the Virgin.

"All the earth doth worship thee, Spouse of the Eternal Father.

"To thee all angels and archangels, thrones and principalities, faithfully do service.

"To thee the whole angelic creation with incessant voice proclaim, Holy! Holy! Holy! Mary, Parent, Mother of God, and Virgin . . . . . Thou with thy Son sittest at the right hand of the Father.

"O Lady, SAVE THY PEOPLE, that we may partake of the inheritance of thy Son;

"And govern us and guard us for ever.

"Day by day we salute thee, O pious one; and we desire to praise thee in mind and in voice, even for ever.

"Vouchsafe, O sweet Mary, to keep us now and for ever without sin.

"Have mercy upon us, O pious one, have mercy upon us.

"Let thy mercy be made great with us, because in thee, O Virgin Mary, we put our trust. In thee, sweet Mary, do we hope; defend us for ever.

"Praise becomes thee. Empire becomes thee. To thee be virtue and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

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Can the most subtle refinement make this merely a request to her to pray for us?

THE ATHANASIAN CREED.

The Athanasian Creed is employed in the same manner; and it is remarkable that the Assumption of the Virgin into heaven (which we shall hereafter prove to have no foundation whatever in fact) is here specified as one of the points to be believed, on pain of forfeiting all hopes of salvation.

"Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold firm the faith concerning the Virgin Mary; which except a man keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly . . . . . .

"Whom at length He took up [assumpsit] himself into heaven; and she sitteth at the right hand of her Son, not ceasing to pray to her Son for us.

"This is the faith concerning the Virgin Mary, which except every one believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved."

THE LITANY.

In the Litany addressed to Mary these sentences occur:

"Holy Mary, whom all things praise and venerate, pray for us—be propitious—spare us, O Lady.

"From all evil deliver us, O Lady.

"In the devastating hour of death deliver us, O Lady.

"From the horrible torments of hell deliver us, O Lady.

"We sinners do beseech thee to hear us.

"That thou wouldest be pleased to give eternal rest

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to all the faithful departed, we beseech thee to hear us, O Lady."

To this catalogue of prayers and praises addressed to the Virgin, we will add only the translation of one prayer more from the same canonized Saint; it contains a passage often referred to, but the existence of which has been doubted and denied. There it stands, however, in his works, vol. vi. p. 406.

"Therefore, O Empress and our most benign Lady, BY THE RIGHT OF A MOTHER COMMAND THY MOST BELOVED SON, our Lord Jesus Christ, that he vouchsafe to raise our minds from the love of earthly things to heavenly desires, who liveth and reigneth." "JURE MATRIS IMPERA tuo dilectissimo filio."

Now, let any man of ordinary understanding and straightforward principles say, whether any, the most ingenious, refinement can fairly interpret all this to mean merely that Bonaventura invoked the Virgin Mary to pray for him, or for his fellow-creatures. It looks as though he were resolved at all hazards to exalt her to an equality with the Almighty, when we find him, not once, not casually, not in the fervent rapture of momentary excitement, but deliberately through the one hundred and fifty psalms, applying to Mary the very words consecrated by the Holy Spirit to the worship of the supreme and only God, and then selecting for her the most solemn expressions with which the Christian Church approaches the Lord of heaven and earth, our Creator, our Saviour, our Sanctifier; employing, moreover, for Mary's honour, the very words of our belief in the ever-blessed Trinity, and substituting throughout Mary's name for God's.

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If such a man as Bonaventura, one of the most learned and celebrated men of his age, could be tempted by the seductive doctrine cherished by the Church of Rome to employ such language, what can be fairly expected of the large mass of persons, who find that language published to the world with the very highest sanction which their religion can give, as the work of a man whom the Almighty declared by miracles to be a chosen vessel, and to have been under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that the Holy Spirit seemed to speak by him ; and of whom they are taught by the infallible testimony of his canonization,* that he is now reigning with Christ in heaven, himself the lawful and appointed object of religious invocation ?

SECTION III.

These excesses in the worship of the Virgin Mary are not confined to Bonaventura, or to his age. Many examples of the same extravagant exaltation of her as the chief object of adoration and praise meet us on every side, in men whose station and abilities might have seemed to hold them forth to the world as burning and shining lights in their generation. And, in drawing attention to the doctrines and expressed feelings of some few from among the host of the Virgin's worshippers, the object in view is not to fasten these sentiments on any professed Roman Catholics who may repudiate them; it is to impress on all persons some idea of the excesses into which even celebrated teachers are tempted to run, when once they allow the smallest inroad to be made upon the integrity of God's worship;

* Cardinal Bellarmin, in his "Church Triumphant," maintains that in the act of canonization the Church is infallible. Vol. ii. p. 871.

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it is also at the same time to caution our countrymen against encouraging in any way that revival of the worship of the Virgin in England, to promote which the highest authorities in the Church of Rome have lately expressed their solicitude. Though these excessive departures from Gospel truth, and the primitive worship of one God by one Mediator, may not be practically adopted by all who belong to the Church of Rome; yet they are the tenets of some of her most approved doctors, — men who were raised to her highest dignities in their life-time, and solemnly enrolled among her Saints after their death, and whose words and actions continue to be appealed to now. But, even in their mildest and least startling form, these doctrines are awfully dangerous; and well does it become every one who loves the truth in sincerity to avoid every unguarded expression which may seem to countenance them.

The fact is, that the direct tendency of the worship of the Virgin, as practically illustrated in the Church of Rome, is to make the Almighty himself an object of fear, and the Virgin an object of love: to invest Him, who is the Father of mercy and God of all comfort, with unapproachable majesty and awe, and with the terrors of eternal justice; and then, in direct and striking contrast, to array Mary with mercy, and benignity, and compassionate tenderness, and omnipotence in her love. His own Word invites us to look to Him not only as a God of love, but as Love itself—"God is Love;"* and so far from terrifying us by representations of his tremendous majesty, and by assurances that we cannot ourselves draw nigh to Him; so far from bidding us to approach him in prayer through

* 1 John, iv. 8.

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mediators, whom (more than our one blessed Redeemer) we might regard as having a fellow-feeling with us, and at the same time resistless influence with him; his own gracious bidding in the Bible is, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest,"* "No man cometh unto the Father but by me,"† "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out,"‡ "Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." §

How entirely opposed to such blessed intimations as these (breathing the spirit that pervades the Scriptures throughout) are those doctrines which represent the Virgin Mary as the mediator through whom and by whom we must sue for the Divine clemency—as the dispenser of all God's services and graces—as the sharer of God's kingdom, leaving to him the department of vengeance, and taking mercy to herself—and as the fountain of pity—as the moderator of Jehovah's justice, and the appeaser of his wrath. "Shew thyself to be a mother." ‖ "Compel thy Son to have pity." ¶ "By thy right of Mother command thy Son." ¶ "Calm the rage of thy heavenly Husband, let his heart be softened towards us." ** "If any one feels himself aggrieved by the justice of God, he may appeal to Mary." †† "God is a God of vengeance, but thou, Mary, dost incline to be merciful." ¶ Surely these are expressions conveying sentiments and associations shocking to our feelings, and from which our reason turns away, as we think of God's perfections, and the full atonement and all-powerful intercession of his Son, Christ our Redeemer. But it must not be

* Matt. xi. 28. † John xiv. 6. ‡ John vi. 37.
§ Heb. iv. 16. ‖ Æst. 597. ¶ Bonaventura.
** Nouveau Recueil. †† Bernardin de Bustis.

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disguised that these are the very sentiments in which the most celebrated defenders of the worship of the Virgin in the Church of Rome teach their disciples to acquiesce, and in which they must have themselves acquiesced, if they put in practice what they taught. It is painful to make such extracts as leave us no alternative in forming an opinion on this point; but it is necessary to do so, or we may do wrong to the cause of truth by suppressing the reality,—a reality over which there has appeared, in some persons high in authority in the Church of Rome, a disposition to draw a veil. The examples, however, are so abundant as to make our selection difficult.

SECTION IV.—GABRIEL BIEL.

Gabriel Biel was a schoolman of great celebrity. He was born at Spires about A. D. 1425, and in 1484 was appointed the first Professor of Theology in the newly founded University of Tubingen. He afterwards retired to a monastery, and died in 1495.

In his 32nd lecture on the Canon of the Mass,* referring to a sermon of St. Bernard, he thus expresses himself:

"The will of God was, that we should have all through Mary.... You were afraid to approach the Father, frightened by only hearing of him.... He gave you Jesus for a Mediator. What could not such a Son obtain from such a Father? He will surely be heard for his own reverence-sake, for the Father loveth the Son. But are you afraid to approach even Him? He is your brother, and your flesh, tempted through all, that he might become merciful. THIS BROTHER MARY GAVE TO YOU. But,

* Tubingen, 1499.

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perhaps, even in HIM you fear the divine majesty, because although he was made man, yet he continued God. You wish to have an advocate even with Him. Betake yourself to Mary; for in Mary is pure humanity, not only pure from all contamination, but pure also by the singleness of her nature. Nor with any doubt would I say, she too will be heard for her own reverence-sake. The Son surely will hear the Mother, and the Father will hear the Son."

The following prayer is offered in the service of the Mass: "Deliver us, we beseech thee, O Lord, from all evils, past, present, and future; and by the intercession of Mary the blessed and glorious ever Virgin-Mother of God, with thy blessed Apostles, Peter, and Paul, and Andrew, and all Saints, mercifully grant peace in our day, that, aided by the help of thy mercy, we may be ever free both from sin and from all disquietude. Through the same our Lord," &c.

On this Collect, Biel, in his 80th lecture, makes this comment:

"Again we ask, in this prayer, the defence of peace; and since we cannot, nor do we presume to obtain this by our own merit, ... therefore we have recourse, in the second part of this prayer, to the suffrages of all his Saints, whom he hath constituted in the court of his kingdom as our mediators, most acceptable to himself, whose prayers his love does not reject. But of them we fly, in the first place, to the most blessed Virgin, the Queen of heaven, to whom the King of kings, the heavenly Father, has given the half of his kingdom; which was signified in Hester the queen, to whom, when she approached to appease King Ahasuerus, the king said, 'Even if thou shalt ask the half of my kingdom, it shall be given to

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thee.' So the heavenly Father, inasmuch as he has justice and mercy as the more valued possessions of his kingdom, RETAINING JUSTICE TO HIMSELF, GRANTED MERCY TO THE VIRGIN MOTHER."

The very same partition of the kingdom of heaven* between the Virgin and God himself is also asserted by one who was dignified by the name of the Venerable and most Christian Doctor, John Gerson, who died in 1429; excepting that, instead of justice and mercy, Gerson mentions power and mercy as the two parts of which God's kingdom consists, and states, that whilst "power remained with the Lord, the part of mercy was ceded to the Mother of Christ and the reigning spouse: hence by the whole Church she is saluted as Queen of Mercy."†

SECTION V.

PETRUS DAMIANUS, BERNARDINUS DE BUSTIS, BERNARDINUS SENNENSIS.

PETER DAMIANI, Cardinal and Bishop, lived four centuries before Biel, though his works received the papal sanction so late as the commencement of the seventeenth century. His writings were published at the command of Pope Clement VIII., who died in the year 1604, and were dedicated to his successor,

* This idea of a partition of the kingdom of the Eternal Creator and Governor unhappily very widely pervades the works of those who have written on the worship and honours due to Mary; associated almost always with the idea of her being the King's spouse, and so the reigning queen of heaven; and, like Esther, the wife of Ahasuerus, pleasing her Royal husband by her grace and beauty, and so appeasing his anger and securing immunities for her own people.

† Gerson, Paris, 1606, tract. iv. Super "Magnificat," part iii. p. 754. See Fabricius, vol. iii. p. 49; Patav. 1754.

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Paul V., who gave the copyright for fifteen years to the editor Constantine Cajetan, A.D. 1606. One quotation will suffice. In his sermon on the Nativity of the Virgin he thus addresses her:

"Nothing is impossible with thee, to whom it is possible to restore those in despair to the hope of blessedness; for how could that authority which derived its flesh from thy flesh oppose thy power? For thou approachest before the golden altar of human reconciliation, not ASKING ONLY, BUT COMMANDING; A MISTRESS, NOT A HANDMAID." *

Two writers now call for our attention whose partial identity of name has not unnaturally led to some confusion as to the writings belonging to each—Bernardinus de Bustis, and Bernardinus Sennensis.†

BERNARDINUS DE BUSTIS (called from a place in the country of Milan) was the celebrated author of "The Office of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin," which was confirmed by the bull of Sixtus IV., and has since been used on the 8th of December. He composed various works in honour of the Virgin, to one of which he gave the title "Mariale." In this work, in the midst of a great variety of sentiments of a similar tendency, he thus expresses himself:

"Of so great authority in the heavenly palace is that Empress, that, omitting all intermediate saints, we may appeal to her from every grievance. With confidence, then, let every one appeal to her, whether he be aggrieved by the devil, or by any tyrant, or by his own body, or by DIVINE JUSTICE." Then, having specified and illustrated the three other

* Non solum rogans, sed imperans; domina, non ancilla. Paris, 1743, vol. ii. p. 107, serm. 44. † Fabricius, vol. i. p. 215.

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sources of grievance, he thus proceeds: "In the fourth place, he may APPEAL TO HER, if any one feels HIMSELF AGGRIEVED BY THE JUSTICE OF GOD. That empress Hester was therefore a figure of this Empress of the heavens, with whom God divided his kingdom. For whereas God has justice and mercy, he retained justice to himself to be exercised in this world, and granted mercy to his mother; and thus, if any one feels himself to be aggrieved in the court of God's justice, let him appeal to the court of mercy of his mother." *

If we calmly weigh the import of these words, is it anything short of robbing the Eternal Father of the brightest jewel in his crown, and sharing his glory with another? Is it not encouraging us to turn our eyes from the God of Mercy as a stern and ruthless judge, and habitually to fix them upon Mary as the dispenser of all we want for the comfort and happiness of our souls?

In another place Bernardine thus exalts Mary:

"Since the Virgin Mary is Mother of God, and God is her Son, and every son is naturally inferior to his mother and subject to her, and the mother is preferred above and is superior to her son, it follows that the blessed VIRGIN IS HERSELF SUPERIOR TO GOD, and GOD HIMSELF IS HER SUBJECT by reason of the humanity derived from her." † And again, "O the unspeakable dignity of Mary, who was worthy to command the Commander of all!" ‡

We must not pass on without making one more quotation from this famed Doctor: it appears to rob God of his justice and power, as well as of his mercy;

* Cologne, 1607, part iii. serm. ii. p. 176.

† Part ix. serm. ii. p. 605. ‡ Part xii. serm. ii. p. 816.

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and to turn our eyes to Mary for the possession of all we can desire, and for safety from all we can dread. Would that Bernardine stood alone in the propagation of these doctrines!

"We may say that the blessed Virgin is Chancellor in the court of heaven. For we see, that, in the chancery of our Lord the Pope, three kinds of letters are granted: some are of simple justice, others are of pure grace, and the third mixed, combining justice and grace.... The third chancellor is he to whom it appertains to give letters of pure grace and mercy. And this office hath the blessed Virgin, and therefore she is called the Mother of grace and mercy; but those letters of mercy she gives only in the present life. For to some souls, as they are departing, she gives letters of pure grace; to others, of simple justice; and to others mixed, namely, of justice and grace. For some have been very much devoted to her, and to them she gives letters of pure grace, by which she COMMANDS that glory be given to them without any pain of purgatory; others are miserable sinners, and not devoted to her, and to them she gives letters of simple justice, by which she COMMANDS that condign vengeance be done upon them; others were lukewarm and remiss in their devotion, and to them she gives letters both of justice and of grace, by which she commands that grace be given unto them, and yet, on account of their negligence and sloth, some pain of purgatory be also inflicted on them."*

BERNARDINUS SENNENSIS.—This Bernardine was a canonized Saint.† A full account of his life, and of his

* Part xii. serm. i. on the 22nd excellence, p. 825.

† Paris, 1636.

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enrolment by the Pope among the Saints of heaven, is found in the "Acta Sanctorum," vol. v. May 20, the day especially dedicated to his honour. Eugenius IV. died before the canonization of Bernardine could be completed; the next Pope, Nicholas V., on Whitsunday, 1450, in full conclave enrolled him among the Saints, as we are told, to the joy of all Italy. In 1461, Pius II. said, that Bernardine was taken for a Saint even in his lifetime; and in 1472, Sixtus IV. issued a bull,. in which he extols the Saint, and authorizes the removal of his body into a new Church, dedicated, as others had been, to his honour.

This Bernardine is equally explicit with others in maintaining that all the blessings which Christians can receive on earth are dispensed by Mary; that her princedom equals the Eternal Father's; that all are her servants and subjects who are the servants and subjects of the most High; that all who adore the Son of God should adore his Virgin Mother; and that the Virgin has repaid the Almighty for all that he has done for the human race. Some of these doctrines are truly startling, but we have been assured they find an echo in the pulpits of many parts of the Continent at the present day. To multiply quotations on these several points is unnecessary and irksome; a few will suffice for all.

"So many creatures do service to the glorious Mary as do service to the Trinity. . . . For he who is the Son of God and of the Blessed Virgin, wishing (so to speak) to make the princedom of his Mother in a manner equal to his Father's, he who was God served his Mother on earth. Moreover, this is true, all things, even the Virgin, are servants of the

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Divine empire; and again, this is true, all things, even God, are servants of the empire of the Virgin." *

"Therefore all the angelic spirits are the ministers and servants of this glorious Virgin."†

"To comprise all in a brief sentence, I have no doubt that God granted all the pardons and liberations in the Old Testament on account of his love and reverence for this blessed maid, by which God preordained from eternity that she should by predestination be honoured above all his works. On account of the immense love of the Virgin, as well Christ himself, as the whole Blessed Trinity, frequently grants pardon to the most wicked sinners."‡

"By the law of succession and the right of inheritance the primacy and kingdom of the whole universe is due to the Blessed Virgin. Nay, when her only Son died on the cross, since he had no one on earth of right to succeed him, his mother by the laws of all succeeded, and by this acquired the principality of all. . . . But of the monarchy of the universe Christ never made any testamentary bequest, because that could never be done without prejudice to his mother. Moreover, he knew that a mother CAN ANNUL the WILL OF HER SON, if it be made to the prejudice of herself."§

"The Virgin-Mother,|| from the time she conceived God, obtained a certain jurisdiction and authority in every temporal procession of the Holy Spirit, so that no creature could obtain any grace of virtue from God,

* Vol. iv. serm. v. c. vi. p. 118. † Serm. iii. c. iii. p. 104.

‡ Serm. v. c. ii. p. 116. § Serm. v. c. vii. pp. 116, 118.

|| Serm. v. c. viii. and Serm. vi. c. ii. pp. 120 and 122.—There is an omission (probably by an error of the press) in the first passage, which the second enables us to supply.

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except according to the dispensation of his Virgin-Mother.* As through the neck the vital breathings descend from the head into the body, so the vital graces are transfused from the head Christ into his mystical body through the Virgin. I fear not to say that this Virgin has a certain jurisdiction over the flowing of all graces. And because she is the mother of such a Son of God, who produces the Holy Spirit, therefore all the gifts, graces, and virtues of the Holy Spirit are administered by the hands of HERSELF to whom she will, when she will, how she will, and in what quantity she will."†

"She is the queen of mercy, the temple of God, the habitation of the Holy Spirit, — always sitting at the right hand of Christ in eternal glory; therefore she is to be venerated, to be saluted, and to be adored with the adoration of hyperdulia: and therefore she sits at the right hand of the King, that, as often as you adore Christ the King, you may adore also the mother of Christ."‡

"The blessed Virgin Mary alone has done more for God, or as much (so to speak) as God hath done for the whole human race. I verily believe that God will excuse me if I now speak for the Virgin. Let us then gather together into one mass what things God hath done for man; and let us consider what satisfaction the Virgin Mary hath returned to the Lord."§ Bernardine then enumerates various particulars, (of many of which the ordinary feelings of reverence and delicacy forbid the transfer into these pages,) putting one

* This Bernardine is constantly referring to St. Bernard for this doctrine, "No grace comes from heaven upon the earth, but what passes through the hands of Mary."

† Serm. v. p. 119.

‡ Serm. vi. p. 121.

§ Serm. vi. p. 120.

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against another, in a sort of debtor and creditor account, and then summing up the total, thus: "Therefore, setting each individual thing one against another, namely, what things God hath done for man, and what things the blessed Virgin has done for God, you will see THAT MARY HAS DONE MORE FOR GOD THAN GOD HAS FOR MAN; so that thus, on account of the blessed Virgin, (whom nevertheless He himself made,) GOD IS IN A CERTAIN MANNER UNDER GREATER OBLIGATIONS TO US THAN WE ARE TO HIM."

The whole treatise he finishes with this address to Mary:

"Truly by mere babbling are we uttering these thy praises and excellencies, but we suppliantly pray thy immense sweetness; do thou by thy benignity supply our insufficiencies, that we may worthily praise thee through the endless ages of ages. Amen."

It may here be remarked, that by almost every writer in support of the worship of the Virgin an appeal is made to St. Bernard * as their chief authority; especially is the following passage quoted by many, either whole or in part, at almost every turn of their argument: †

"If thou art disturbed by the heinousness of thy crimes, and confounded by the foulness of thy conscience, if terrified by the horror of judgment thou begin to be swallowed up in the gulf of despair, think of Mary, invoke Mary; let her not depart from thy heart, let her not depart from thy mouth. For, while thinking of her, thou dost not err; imploring her, thou

* The present Pope in the same manner refers to him in his Encyclical letter.

† See Bern. Sen. vol. iv. p. 124. The passage is found in Bernard. Paris, 1640, p. 25.

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dost not despair; following her, thou dost not lose thy way; while she holds thee, thou dost not fall; while she protects thee, thou dost not fear; while she is thy leader, thou art not wearied; while she is favourable, thou reachest thy end."

SECTION VI.

DIPTYCHA MARIANA.

We have already observed, that the excesses and extravagancies into which the worshippers of the Virgin have run, when brought to light, exceed all that we have been accustomed to meet with in books or in conversation. So revolting are many of them, that able and learned Roman Catholic writers have deemed the exposure and refutation of them a pious work, due even to the Virgin herself, in order to preserve her legitimate honours from disparagement and ridicule. It is very curious to find that these very writers, while they open to us a mass of superstition, and idolatry, and blasphemy, of which we should not otherwise have been aware, and while they expose and reprove what they call unwarrantable excesses in the votaries of Mary, themselves supply us with the strongest and most convincing evidence of the deplorable extent to which, even with their countenance and support, both from argument and from their own example, the worship of the Virgin in its most modified form entrenches upon the honour due to God only, and tempts Christians to anchor on the intercession of Mary that holy hope which should rest only on Christ himself.

The work of Theophilus Raynaud, a Jesuit of

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Lyons, is in many points very curious and interesting. One of its professed principles is to modify and reduce within reasonable bounds the worship of the Virgin Mary, and to explode those excesses which, by exciting disgust or suspicion, might endanger, what he considers, her rightful praise and glory. But, fearing lest his intention should be misunderstood, he thinks it necessary to make an explicit profession of his sense of the boundless merits of the Virgin, for expressing which he adopts the words of a former writer. "The torrents of heaven and the fountains of the great deep I would rather open than close in homage of the Virgin. And, if HER SON JESUS HAS OMITTED anything as to the pre-eminence of the exaltation of his own mother, I a servant, I a slave, not indeed with effect, but with affection, would delight in filling it up. I had rather verily have no tongue, than say one word against our Lady; I would rather have no soul, than diminish aught of her glory."*

Many of the dissertations, (some approved, some carried on at great length, some discountenanced by this writer,) on which men have dared to enter as to the mystery of the incarnation of the eternal Son of God, cannot be quoted here, even to be reproved, without setting at nought all decency and pious reverence; and we will leave them. They warn us at every step to avoid all vain curiosity, and never to pry into those secret things which belong to the Lord our God; and of the manifold questions which are idle and profitless, and savouring of superstition rather than of indelicacy, our plan admits of a reference only to a very few. Among those numerous tenets which Ray-

* "Si Filius ejus Jesus aliquid omisisset in prerogativâ exultationis [qy. exaltationis] suæ matris." Raynaud, Lugduni, 1665. Vol. vii. p. 4.

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naud records as having been maintained by the votaries of the Virgin, but which he discountenances, are these:

"That the Virgin had rescued and snatched some souls out of hell, that they might do penance."*

"That the very flesh of the Virgin Mary is adored daily in the Church with supreme worship, and is a victim offered to God, for a sacrifice of sweet savour to the Lord, because her flesh is one with Christ's,"† and "is to be worshipped in the Eucharist with the adoration of hyperdulia."‡

"That, by reason of her maternity, the Virgin Mary might be worshipped with the worship with which God is himself worshipped,—the adoration of LATRIA;"§ and he tells us that both Suarez and Mendoza maintained this doctrine.

This author disapproves of the sentiment, (a sentiment which unhappily seems by no means to be confined to the author whom he cites, and whose works he says had an immense circulation,) that Christians love Christ on account of, and in consequence of, the love which they bear to his mother.‖

St. Ildefonsus, he tells us, "with a faithful presumption and pious boldness," extended the power of the Virgin to hell, granting to the damned some remedy and refreshing, and freedom from the vexation of the devils, "on the day of her assumption."¶

Now, the evidence of such an author as this, who was a member of the College of Jesuits, seems to be both unobjectionable and very valuable. If one of

* Raynaud, vol. vii. p. 15. † P. 237.
‡ P. 65. § P. 229.
‖ "Amo Te, Christe Deus, propter matrem quam diligo." P. 235.
¶ P. 228.

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his main objects was to condemn the excessive and extravagant acts of worship and adoration which he witnessed in his predecessors and contemporaries, we must infer that while his own practice, at all events, did not exceed the average, it may fairly be supposed to fall below it. And what does he profess to allow or to maintain? or what worship does he feel himself justified in offering to the Virgin?

Although many more passages are at hand, we will quote only two: one describing a form of worship, which will make her praise perfect, if her votary will add the imitation of Mary; and the other, the closing words of his work, called Diptycha Mariana, in which he declares it to be his delight to address to the Virgin a hymn in imitation of the Te Deum.

In the first passage,* he begins by saying that he will not suffer himself to pass by "a pious daily practice of worshipping and religiously invoking the blessed Virgin in private, supplied by Richard of St. Lawrence" (lib. ii. de B. V. partic 5). "The will," he says, "of the Son is, that we should bless his Mother and our Sovereign Lady at all times, namely, by night and by day, in prosperity and adversity; and that her praise should ever dwell in our heart and in our mouth; by meditating upon her, by praising her, by praying, blessing, giving thanks to her, by preaching forth her greatnesses; and that her praise should be as a curb in our jaws curbing us in from the vices of the tongue. Wherefore SHE ALSO HERSELF PROMISES, WITH HER SON, to him who praises her (Isaiah 48), 'With my praise will I curb thee, that thou perish not.' Also that thou mayest fulfil that psalm (102), &c. 'All that is within me bless HER' [EJUS is ambiguous,

* P. 232.

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but '*ab eâ*,' in the next line, fixes the sense] 'holy name.' And daily are her [ejus] members individually to be blessed, that we may receive back a blessing to our members individually from her [*ab eâ*]. In like manner are her feet to be blessed, with which she carried the Lord; the womb, in which she carried him; the heart, whence she courageously believed in him, and fervently loved him; the breasts, with which she gave him suck; the hands, with which she nourished him; the mouth and tongue, with which she gave to him the happy kisses of our redemption; the nostrils, with which she smelled the sweet-smelling fragrance of his humanity; the ears, with which she listened with delight to his eloquence; the eyes, with which she devoutly looked upon him; the body and soul, which Christ consecrated in her with every benediction. And these most sacred members must be saluted and blessed with all devotion, so that separate salutations must be addressed to the several members separately, namely, 'Hail, Mary,' two to the feet, one to the womb, one to the heart, two to the breasts, two to the hands, two to the mouth and tongue, two to the lips, two to the nostrils, two to the ears, two to the eyes, two to the soul and body. And thus in all there are twenty salutations, which after the manner of a daily payment, with separate and an equal number of kneelings, if it can be done, before her image or altar, are to be paid to the glorious Virgin, according to that psalm (144). 'Every day will I give thanks unto thee, and praise THY name for ever,' &c. And as those persons say who have experienced it, and have heard it from holy men, scarcely can be found any other form of service [servitii] which would so much please the Virgin, or from which so much

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devotion would flow back to those who love her. Likewise, through all her members separately, after the kneeling, adoration, and salutation, thus must it be said: 'Sweet Lady, I adore and bless those most blessed feet, by which thou didst carry the Lord upon the earth; I adore and bless that most blessed womb, in which thou didst carry him:' and so to the other members and senses, commemorating their acts by which they served the Lord; and this will devotion better prescribe than a discourse, grace better than writing."

And this is a branch of Mary's worship approved and recommended by one whose professed object is to curtail, and limit, and purify, and reduce her worship within reasonable bounds! Can we wonder at the horrible blasphemies which meet us on every side? too dreadful, many of them, to be repeated; but, nevertheless, unhappily upon record. If one who reproves those who indulge in extravagant and excessive worship of the Virgin will himself, not in the fervour of enthusiasm, nor hurried along by the impetuosity of his own eloquence, calmly and deliberately sanction such condensed superstition as the above service involves, what must have been the extravagancies and excesses which he condemns? Here the worshipper of the Virgin is directed to perform daily a peculiar service to her, in order that he might towards her fulfil the prophetic measure of the Psalmist's devotion, when he called upon his soul and all within him to bless God the Lord Jehovah. Here it is declared that it was "Mary, with her Son," who made that promise to her votaries of safety from destruction, which, whatever be the promise, the Word of inspired truth declares to have been made,

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not by Mary, but by the Lord omnipotent. God, in the passage containing the promise now ascribed first to the Virgin, (though her Son is joined with her) announces himself, the speaker, the promiser, to be "the first and the last." "I am He—mine hand hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens." The Bible declares the speaker to be God: this writer substitutes Mary for God; and although her ever-blessed Son is joined, yet Mary's praise, and not her Son's, is the only offering to which her promise is here applied.* Really, what we read of the works of Marie D'Agreda, though more shocking to our feelings, as the errors are detailed, yet scarcely implies greater impiety in itself, or more directly and unequivocally robs God of his glory."†

Raynaud's accommodation of the Te Deum to the Virgin Mary contains these sentences:

"We praise thee, Queen of heaven; we honour thee, Sovereign Lady of the world.

"All creatures of right praise thee, Mother of immense splendour, Chamber of the Trinity most high, &c.

"Thou art the beloved daughter of the Eternal Father; thou art the elect mother of the Son of God; and also the Holy Bride of the Comforter.

"All angels obey thee. Thee the heavens of heavens love inestimably.

"To thee Cherubin and Seraphin cry aloud with ineffable voice, 'Hail, Hail, Hail, O Lady of glory; the

* See Bayle. Amsterdam, vol. i. p. 96.

† This writer quotes the Vulgate, which makes the substitution of the Virgin's name for the everlasting Creator's still more glaring. "Laude meâ infrenabo te, ne intereas. . . . Audi me, Jacob. Ego ipse, ego primus, et ego novissimus."

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heavens and earth are full of the sweetness of thy grace.'

"Thou art the Queen of the apostles, thou the teaching of the evangelists.

"Thee the praiseworthy company of the prophets, thee the band of patriarchs worship.

"Thou art the victory of martyrs, thou the glory of confessors.

"Thee the roses of Paradise, glorious virgins, praise; as do the chaste in their choir, singing 'Hail, O sweetest Queen, rejoice, O our most worthy Mother, who pourest grace upon the saints, and deliverest souls from the depths.'

"We sinners therefore beseech thee, O Mother of God, help that people, whom the precious blood of thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ redeemed.

"Make us to be numbered* with thy saints in glory most high.

"Through thee may we, O holy Mother, be deemed worthy to be piously comforted.

"Thou who art crowned with so many prerogatives of holiness in the glory of the Father, rejoicing by thy right of mother in so many privileges of dignity; joy, rejoice, be glad, who art greater than all praise, O merciful, O pious, O sweet Mary the Virgin."

The author adds, as his closing expression:

"May these be my words through the whole of this life, and may I with the holy angels break forth into the same through all eternity!"

"I have treated concerning Christ—I have treated concerning his Mother.† Sweet is the Lord, sweet

* The reading (probably by an error of the press) is "munerari."

† Raynaud adopts here the words of Damiani.

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is the Lady; because He, my God, is my mercy; she, my Lady, is my gate of mercy. May the mother conduct us to her Son, the daughter to her Father, the bride to her Husband, who is blessed for ever more! Amen." *

With men and Christians bent on arriving at the truth, and possessing it, can any refinement take from this address the character of a direct prayer to the Virgin for benefits in her power to bestow? Can it be freed from an ascription of the divine attributes to Mary?

In the very words in which Christians have been long wont to seek for God's mercy, and to praise Him, does this parody on the Te Deum ask for Mary's help, and proclaim her praises.

"Make us to be numbered with the saints in glory.

"We therefore pray thee help the people.

"To thee Cherubin and Seraphin with ineffable voice do cry.

"The goodly company of the prophets worship thee," &c.

And yet this is the worship offered to the Virgin by one who considers himself as a pattern of moderation, and discretion, and care, and circumspection, and prudence in his praises of the Virgin. "Others among her votaries (he tells us in a sort of feigned address to one of them) flew through the air, whilst he was contented to walk on foot as long as he remained on earth; others poured forth words like torrents in her praise, he weighed them in the balance of judgment; others gathered a sour and unripe vintage, he culled ripe fruit in its season and brought them to the table."

* P. 240.

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These cautions against paying excessive and indiscreet honours to the Virgin are not made by Raynaud cursorily in passing; they are dwelt upon, and repeated, and confirmed, and illustrated through many folio pages.* This writer's evidence is unexceptionable; it cannot be suspected; and it is conclusive.

* P. 9, &c.

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CHAPTER III.

PRESENT SENTIMENTS IN THE CHURCH OF ROME.

SECTION I.

It may, perhaps, be surmised that, whereas the authors cited in the last section lived many years ago, the sentiments of those who profess the faith of Rome now, have undergone many changes.* Assurances moreover have, from time to time, been given, that the invocation of the Virgin implies nothing more than a request that she would intercede with God and implore his mercy for her supplicants, just as one Christian may ask a brother on earth to pray for him. Even were this so, we can see no analogy between the two cases; but is the fact so? Whatever confidence we may place on the honesty of those who make such declarations, we can discover no new key to interpret satisfactorily the forms of prayer which meet us on every side. Confessedly there are no changes in the authorized and appointed services; we discover no traces of change in the worship of private devotion. The Breviary and the Missal contain the same offices of the Virgin Mary as in former days.† The same sentiments are expressed to her in public; the same forms of devotion, both in prayer and praise, are provided for the use of individuals in their daily exercises. Whatever meaning is rightly to be attached

* See a sermon by the titular Bishop of Siga, preached at Bradford, July 27, 1825, p. 15. † Encyclical Letter of the present Pope.

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to the expressions employed, (and surely in the most holy and momentous of all things it is dangerous and unjustifiable to employ one language for the ear and eye, and another for the understanding and heart,) the prevailing expressions remain the same as we have found them to have been in past ages.

At the head of these modern proofs we reasonably place the encyclical letter of the present Sovereign Pontiff, where the spirit of the worship of the Virgin seems to diffuse itself throughout in its full strength. Referring the Pope's words to a test which we have already applied in a similar case, changing the name of the person addressed or spoken of, and substituting the name of the Eternal Father or of his Blessed Son, it is difficult for us to see how the spirit of the Pope's sentiments falls in the least below the highest grade of religious worship.

His words in the third paragraph of this letter, as they appear in the Laity's Directory for 1833,* are these:

"But† having at length taken possession of our see in the Lateran Basilic, according to the custom and institution of our predecessors, we turn to you without delay, venerable brethren, and, in testimony of our feelings towards you, we select for the date of our letter

* "The encyclical letter of our most holy Father Pope Gregory, by Divine Providence the sixteenth of that name, to all patriarchs, primates, archbishops, and bishops."

† This is the translation circulated in the Roman Catholic Annual (p. 15), called the Laity's Directory for the year 1833, on the title-page of which is this notice: "The Directory for the Church Service printed by Messrs. Keating and Brown is the only one which is published with the authority of the Vicars Apostolic in England. London, Nov. 1829. (Signed) James, Bishop of Usula, Vic. Apost. Lond."

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this most joyful day, on which we celebrate the solemn festival of the most blessed Virgin's triumphant assumption into heaven; that she, who has been through every great calamity our patroness and protectress, MAY WATCH OVER US WRITING TO YOU, AND LEAD OUR MIND BY HER HEAVENLY INFLUENCE to those counsels which may prove most salutary to Christ's flock."*

For the name of Mary let us here substitute the holiest name of all, the Eternal Spirit of Jehovah himself, and would not these words be a suitable vehicle of a Christian pastor's sentiments? Or let us fix on Christmas-day, or Easter, or Holy Thursday; and what word expressive of thankfulness for past mercies to the Supreme Giver of all good things, or of hope and trust in the guidance of the Spirit of counsel, and wisdom, and strength, who alone can order the wills and ways of men, might not a Christian bishop take from this declaration of the present Pope, and use it in its first and natural sense, when speaking of the Lord God Almighty?

"We select for the date of our letter this most joyful day, on which we celebrate the solemn festival of the most Blessed Redeemer's nativity, (or glorious resurrection, or ascension,) that He, who has been through every great calamity our patron and protector, may watch over us writing to you, and lead our mind by his heavenly influence to those counsels which may prove most salutary to Christ's flock."

* We have already seen how utterly groundless is the legend of the Virgin's assumption, how totally unworthy of credit to any one who will trace its history, from the total silence of the first ages, to its final establishment as an article of faith; and here the Roman Pontiff refers to it, as he would have referred to the Ascension of our Lord, recorded in the Holy Gospels!

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From these sentiments of the present Pope, weighing the words employed, and, so far as words may be relied upon as interpreters of the thoughts, looking to the spirit of his professions, we can fairly draw only one inference. However direct and immediate the prayers of any supplicants may be to the Virgin for her protection and defence from all dangers spiritual and bodily, and for the guidance of their inmost thoughts in the right way, such petitioners to Mary would be sanctioned to the utmost by the principles and examples of the present Roman Pontiff.

We shall be led in a subsequent part of this work (when examining the records of the Council of Chalcedon) to compare the closing words of this encyclical letter of the present Pope with the more holy, and primitive, and Scriptural aspirations of the Bishops of Rome and Constantinople in those earlier days; and not less striking is the contrast between the sentiments now expressed in the opening parts of the same letter, and the spirit of various collects framed for the use of the faithful before the invocation of the Virgin had unhappily gained its present strong hold and ascendancy in the Church of Rome. For example, a collect* at vespers teaches to pray to God as the source from whom all holy desires and all good counsels proceed; and on the fifth Sunday after Easter this prayer is offered, "O God, from whom all good things do come, grant, we pray Thee, that by thy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy guidance may perform the same;" while on the fifth Sunday after the Epiphany, in a collect the spirit of which is strongly contrasted with the

* Hiem. 149.

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sentiments of the Pope in both parts of his encyclical letter, the Supreme Being is thus piously addressed, "We beseech Thee, O Lord, with thy continuous pity guard thy family, that, leaning on the sole hope of heavenly grace, it may ever be defended by thy protection."*

SECTION II.

Materials are abundantly supplied which may enable us to form a correct estimate of the state of the worship of the Virgin at the present day, wherever allegiance is acknowledged to Rome. Volumes might readily be composed, consisting wholly of rules and instructions and forms of prayer appertaining to the Virgin, published by authority both in our own country and on the Continent, to which the Word of God and the doctrine and practice of the primitive Church seem to us utterly and irreconcilably opposed. To some of these our argument requires that we refer; though it is neither a profitable nor a pleasing task to dwell, longer than the necessity of the case calls for, on such lamentable corruptions.

"The 'Imitation of the Virgin Mary,' composed on the plan of the 'Imitation of Christ,'"† is a work in its substance and in its title highly objectionable. The tendency of its very plan is by association to exalt Mary to the same place in our hearts and minds which Thomas à Kempis had laboured in his "Imitation of Christ" to secure for the Saviour; and it recalls the proceedings of Bonaventura, in writing psalms

* Hiem. 364.

† London, 1816. "Approved by T. R. Anselini, Doctor of Sorbonne, late Bishop of Boulogne.—From the French."

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to the honour of the Virgin after the manner of David in his hymns to the Lord of Glory.

The following prayer to the Virgin seems to be stained with the error, already adverted to, of contrasting the justice and stern dealings even of the Saviour, with the mercy, and loving-kindness, and fellow-feeling of Mary; to make God the object of fear, the Virgin the object of love:

"Mother of my Redeemer, O Mary, in the last moment of my life I implore thy assistance with more earnestness than ever. I find myself, as it were, placed between heaven and hell. Alas! what will become of me, if thou do not exert in my behalf thy powerful influence with Jesus? . . . I die with SUBMISSION, since Jesus has ordained it; but, notwithstanding the natural horror which I have of death, I die WITH PLEASURE, because I die under THY protection." *

In the fourteenth chapter† the following passage occurs:

"It is giving to the blessed Virgin a testimony of love, particularly dear and precious to her, to make her holy spouse Joseph the first object of our devotion, next to that which CONSECRATES US TO HER SERVICE. The name of Joseph is invoked with singular devotion by all the true faithful. They frequently join it with the sacred names of Jesus and Mary. Whilst Jesus and Mary lived at Nazareth, if we had wished to obtain some honour from them, could we have employed a more powerful protector than St. Joseph? Will he now have less power and credit? GO THEREFORE TO JOSEPH (Gen. xli. 55‡) that he may

* Chap. xiii. p. 344. † P. 347.

‡ This reference to Holy Scripture in support of a doctrine and practice with which it has nothing to do, is not singular in writers

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intercede for you. Whatever favour you ask, God will grant it you at his request. . . . Go to Joseph in all your necessities; but especially to obtain the grace of a happy death. The general opinion that he died in the arms of Jesus and Mary has inspired the faithful with great confidence, that through his intercession they will have an end as happy and consoling as his. In effect it has been remarked, that it is particularly at the hour of death that those who have been during their life careful to honour this great Saint reap the fruit of their devotion."

In this passage, the low and unworthy idea, itself formed on a groundless tradition, is introduced, of paying reverence to one Saint above the rest, in order to gratify and conciliate another. Joseph must especially be honoured, in order to do what is most acceptable to Mary. Can the tendency of this be any other than to withdraw the mind from that habitual reference of all our actions immediately to God, which the primitive teachers of our holy faith were so anxious to cultivate in all who call themselves by the name of Christ?

In a devotional work, entitled "The Little Testament of the Holy Virgin,"* the following is called "A Prayer to the Blessed Virgin."† Can any thing more entirely place on a perfect level with each other the

who are resolved, at whatever sacrifice of truth and reason, to make every thing bear upon their favourite theory. What countenance can be given to Christians now invoking in prayer Joseph the husband of Mary, by the circumstance of Pharaoh having told the Egyptians, when crying to him for bread, to go to Joseph his minister, who had the charge of those things? "Go to Joseph"—it is a mere trifling play upon a word in things where the salvation of souls is at stake.

* Dublin, 1836. † P. 46.

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Eternal Son of God, and the Virgin — Jesus and Mary?

"O Mary, what would be our poverty and misery if the Father of mercies had not drawn you from his treasury to give you to earth! Oh! my Life and Consolation! I trust and confide in your holy name. My heart wishes to love you; my lips to praise you; my mind to contemplate you; my soul sighs to be yours. Receive me, defend me, preserve me; I cannot perish in your hands. Let the demons tremble when I pronounce your holy name, since you have ruined their empire; but we shall say, with St. Anselm, that he does not know God, who has not an idea sufficiently high of your greatness and glory. We shall esteem it the greatest honour to be of the number of your servants. Let your glory, blessed Mother, be equal to the extent of your name; reign after God over all that is beneath God; but, above all, reign in my heart. You will be my consolation in suffering, my strength in weakness, my counsel in doubt. At the name of Mary, my hope shall be enlightened, my love inflamed. Oh that I could deeply engrave the dear name on every heart, suggest it to every tongue, and make all celebrate it with me. Mary! sacred name, under which no one should despair. Mary! sacred name, often assaulted, but always victorious. Mary! it shall be my life, my strength, my comfort. Every day shall I invoke IT AND THE DIVINE NAME OF JESUS. The Son shall awake the recollection of the mother, and the mother that of the Son. Jesus AND Mary! this is what my heart shall say at my last hour, if my tongue cannot. I shall hear them on my death-bed; they shall be wafted on my expiring breath, and I with them, to see THEM, know THEM, bless and love THEM for eternity. Amen."

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Alphonso Liguori, who died in 1787, was canonized by the present Pope in 1839; the Sacred Congregation of Rites having pronounced his works uncensurable, and Pope Pius VII., in 1803, having approved of their sentence. In his works we find sentiments the same with those which we have already cited from the Bernardines, Bonaventura, and others of former days, and which shew that the worship of the Virgin is now what it was in their times.

In his "Glories of Mary,"* among other passages of similar import, we read the following:

"If Ahasuerus heard the petition of Esther through love, will not God, who has an infinite love for Mary, fling away at her suit the thunderbolts which He was going to hurl on wretched sinners? Will God reject her prayer? Is it not of her it was said, 'The law of clemency is on her lips?' Indeed every petition she offers is as a LAW emanating from the Lord, by which He OBLIGES himself to be merciful to those for whom she intercedes."†

"Hope of the universe! My only hope! Come to my assistance.‡

"'From the moment that Mary consented to become the Mother of God,' says St. Bernardine of Sienna, 'she merited to receive sovereignty over all creatures.' 'Mary and Jesus having but one and the same flesh,' saith St. Arnaud, abbot, 'why should not the mother enjoy conjointly with the Son the honours of royalty? Mary is then Queen of the universe, since Jesus is its King.' Thus, as St. Bernardine again observes, 'As

* "The Glories of Mary, Mother of God, translated from the Italian of Blessed Alphonso Liguori, containing a beautiful paraphrase on the 'Salve Regina.'"—Dublin, 1833.

† Pp. 16, 17. ‡ P. 40.

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many creatures as obey God, so many obey the glorious Virgin.' 'I am,' said she to St. Bridget, 'the Queen of heaven and Mother of mercy. I am the joy of the just, and the gate through which sinners go to God.' Queen of heaven and earth, Mother of God, my Sovereign mistress, I present myself before you, as a poor mendicant before a mighty queen. No grace, no pardon, emanates from the throne of the King of kings without passing through the hands of Mary, according to St. Bernard. The plenitude of grace is found in Jesus Christ as the head, whence it flows to Mary, who communicates it to all his members. No doubt, Jesus the Man-God alone suffered to effect our redemption; but it was more convenient, that, both sexes having concurred to our ruin, both should conspire to save us. Albertus Magnus styles Mary 'the coadjutrix of our redemption.' All is subject to Mary's empire, even God himself. Jesus has rendered Mary omnipotent: the one is omnipotent by nature, the other is omnipotent by grace. St. Germanus says to Mary, 'You, O Holy Virgin, have over God the authority of a mother, and hence you obtain pardon for the most obdurate sinners.' It is impossible that a true servant of Mary should be damned. 'My soul,' says the blessed Eric Suzon, 'is in the hands of Mary; so that, if the Judge wishes to condemn me, the sentence must pass through this clement Queen, and she knows how to prevent its execution!'"*

These words are extracted from the works of one who died only in 1787, and was canonized by the present Pope, with all solemn pomp, only in the year 1839. Is Rome changed?

* See Mr. Palmer's Fifth Letter to Dr. Wiseman, p. 80.

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"St. Anselm, to increase our confidence in Mary, assures us that our prayers will often be MORE SPEEDILY heard in invoking her name, than in calling on that of Jesus Christ."*

"Dispensatrix of the Divine grace, you save whom you please; to you then I commit myself, that the enemy may not destroy me."†

"We, holy Virgin, hope for grace and salvation from you, and since you need but say the word, ah! do so: you shall be heard, and we shall be saved."‡

"Be mindful of the holy Church, be thou its guardian and its protectress, be thou always to it a sweet asylum, an impregnable fortress against all the efforts of hell. Be THOU OUR WAY, by which we may go to Jesus, and the channel through which may flow to us all the graces necessary to our salvation."§ So far Liguori.

In the "New Month of Mary"‖ this prayer is offered to the Virgin:

"O most powerful, because most faithful of God's creatures, I presume to approach thee with a lively sentiment of my own unworthiness to address God, whose indignation I have so much deserved; and with a strong conviction in the efficacy of thy intercession with Jesus, thy divine Son, who has placed in thy hands all power and strength. May these sentiments always increase within me, that I may never presume, but PLACE ALL MY CONFIDENCE IN THEE."

The "Hebdomas Mariana,"¶ a devotional work "for every day in the week in honour of the most Glorious Virgin-Mother of God, in order to obtain the grace of a happy death," in the midst of many others to the

* P. 96. † P. 100. ‡ P. 137.
§ "Sacred Heart of Jesus." Dublin, 1834; p. 33.
‖ London, 1841; p. 72. ¶ Dublin, 1839.

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same effect, contains the following prayers: "O Holy Mary, merciful Queen of Heaven, Daughter of God the Father, Mother of God the Son, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, noble Couch of the whole Trinity; elected by the Father, preserved by the Son, beloved by the Holy Ghost; overshadowed by the Father, inhabited by the Son, filled with all grace by the Holy Ghost; THROUGH THEE AND FOR THEE may I be blessed by God the Father, who created me; may I be blessed by God the Son, who redeemed me by his most precious blood; may I be blessed by God the Holy Ghost, who sanctified me in baptism; and may the most Sacred Trinity, THROUGH THY INTERCESSION, receive my soul at the hour of death." *

"O Holy Mary, Mother of our Redeemer! say at the hour of my death that thou art my mother, that I may be blessed, and that my soul may live for thee. And if I shall be sent to that prison of burning until I pay the last farthing, may thy mercy descend with me to refresh me in the flames, to solace me in my torments, that I may say, 'According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, may thy consolations rejoice my soul.'† Thou, O mother, then hasten to assist me: let not thy Son depart until He shall have blessed me, and remitted all my debts, BECAUSE THOU HAST REQUESTED HIM. Amen."‡

The following prayers are published for those who are admitted into the "Pious Confederation of the most Holy Mary, Mother of Providence, the auxi-

* Pp. 3, 4.

† Like Bonaventura's psalms, this modern prayer applies to the Virgin Mary the pious sentiments of the psalmist towards the Eternal Father.

‡ Pp. 13, 14.

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liatrix of Christians, canonically established at Rome:" *

"O Mother of God, most Holy Mary! how many times have I by my sins deserved hell. Already, perhaps, would the sentence on my first sin have been executed, if THOU HADST not compassionately delayed the divine justice; and then, overcoming my hardness, hadst drawn me to have confidence in thee. And, O! into how many crimes, perhaps, should I have fallen, in the dangers which have happened to me, if thou, affectionate mother, hadst not preserved me with the grace which thou hadst obtained for me," &c.

Here, as elsewhere, Mary is put before the understandings and hearts of Christians as the benign power which stays divine justice, when the God of mercy without her intervention would have poured out his vengeance on the guilty; and as the watchful and loving guardian who preserves the soul from sinning, when the Holy Spirit, without her grace, would have suffered the soul to fall under the temptation and perish.

But we must not dwell longer† on this painful proof of the excessive departure from Gospel truth and primitive faith, into which our Roman Catholic brethren (as it should seem, inevitably) run in the worship of the Virgin.

SECTION III.

When we read in the works of different ages and of distant countries such tenets as these, expressed in the solemn act of prayer:

* Rome, with permission, 1835.

† Cumulative evidence to the same effect will be found in a late work called "Mariolatry." Painter, 1841.

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That the sentence on our sins might have been executed by God, if Mary had not stayed the divine justice;

That we might have fallen into many sins, had not Mary, by her grace, preserved us from falling;

That she can refresh the tormented soul even in the place of burning;

That our prayers may be sometimes more speedily heard when we invoke Mary's name, than when we pray to the Lord Jesus;

That she is the way through which alone we can go to Jesus, and the only channel through which divine grace can flow into our souls;

That, when our sins make us unworthy to address God, we are to approach Mary, and place our entire hope and confidence in her;

That God, for the infinite love He has to Mary, will fling away, at her suit, the thunderbolt which He was on the point of hurling on wretched sinners;

That when the Eternal and Omnipotent Judge of all the earth, who cannot but do right, WISHES TO CONDEMN THE GUILTY, Mary knows how to PREVENT THE EXECUTION OF THE SENTENCE;

That when the self-condemned sinner feels himself placed between heaven and hell, and death is at hand, he meets death with submission, because God has ordained it; but, despite of the natural horror of death, he will die with pleasure, because he dies under Mary's protection;—

When we find these, and unnumbered other sentiments equivalent in their force and bearing to these, we are indeed constrained to say, Can the religion which sanctions and prescribes these things be the Christian religion? — the religion which the one Mediator brought down with Him from the eternal and

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only God in heaven? In these sentiments we hear not the voice of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus; in these representations we see no sign of that Lamb of God whose blood cleanseth from all sin, and who, for the great love wherewith He loved us, is gone before to prepare a place for us with himself for ever. In the words of one * who, with soundness of faith and fervent piety, unites a charitable but uncompromising maintenance of the truth against any of the varied corruptions of superstition and misbelief; —

"As though all human sympathy were not absolute deadness in comparison with the exquisite sensibility of Him, 'whom in all things it behoved to be made like unto his brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high-priest, touched with the feelings of our infirmities;' 'in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' As though all human love were not shallowness itself in comparison with the unexplored profoundness of those yearnings of affection, which, with more power than ever superstition ascribed to magic charms, did draw down the Sun of heaven from its throne, did clothe the very and eternal Word with 'the form of a servant,' with the 'likeness of men,' so that He 'humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' As if the Maker of woman did not possess in inexhaustible abundance those treasures of tenderness from out of whose overflow it is that He has adorned the loveliest of his works."

Let every refinement of distinction be applied between the honour due to God, and the honour paid to the Virgin; between the advocacy of Christ, and the intercession of Mary; between prayers direct, and

* The Right Hon. Wm. Ewart Gladstone in his "Church Principles." London, 1840; p. 355.

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prayers oblique; between the hope and confidence which the apostles, both by their teaching and example, bid the faithful Christian rest on God's mercy in Jesus Christ, and the hope and confidence which the canonized saints, and the doctors, and Popes of the Church of Rome profess to place in the power and mercy of Mary: let every explanation which ingenuity can devise be applied here, and the practical upshot of the whole is a tendency (sometimes direct and absolute, sometimes indirect, and inferential, and circuitous, and so the more perilous and beguiling,) to dispossess our Saviour of many, nay, even of all his saving and redeeming functions, and to leave to Him only the stern, unapproachable character of a judge;—to wean the affections from God, and fix them upon Mary;—to make the personal application of his blood and merits, whereby alone we can for a moment stand in the place of sons and realize the spirit of adoption, to become dependent on her intercession;—to represent all the blessings and graces of the Holy Spirit, his converting and enlightening grace, his protecting and guiding grace, his strengthening and comforting grace, as all shut up in a sealed fountain till her benign and divine influence open it, and convey through herself such portions of the heavenly treasure as she will to those who have secured her omnipotent patronage;—to lead believers on to regard Mary as the way, and God in Christ as the truth and the life, approachable only by that way;—in a word, to hold forth the Lord God omnipotent, the gracious, merciful, loving Father, as an object of awe and terror, as the inflexible dispenser of divine justice, inflexible except when his love for Mary bends Him to be merciful to her votaries;—and thus to make her in very and practical truth (though

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not theoretically, perhaps,) the nearest and dearest object of a Christian's love.

But what saith the Scripture to these things?

Since the above pages were written, the author has become accidentally acquainted with a fact of which he was before in ignorance, that to such a pitch had the habit risen, not merely of placing our blessed Lord and the Virgin upon an equality, but of setting Jesus aside merely to make room for Mary, that the Christian era was made to begin, not from the "birth of Christ," but from "THE VIRGIN MOTHER OF GOD." — See Emanuel Acosta's "Acts of the Jesuits in the East." Dilingæ, 1571. "Ad annum USQUE A DEIPARA VIRGINE, 1568."

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PART II.

EVIDENCE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

CHAPTER I.—SECTION I.

THE BIBLE.

If there is one paramount and pervading principle more characteristic of the revealed Word of God than any other, it seems to be this,—the preservation of a practical belief in the perfect unity of God, and the fencing of his worship against the admixture of any other of whatever character or form; the announcement that the Creator and Governor of the universe is the sole Giver of every temporal and spiritual blessing, the one only Being to whom his rational creatures should pay any religious service whatever, the one only Being to whom mortals must seek, by prayer and invocation, for the supply of any of their wants. And to this principle the New Testament has added another principle equally essential — that there is one, and only one, Mediator between God and man, through whom every blessing must be sought and obtained, the Lord Christ Jesus, who is ever making intercession for us.

As to the first principle, through the entire volume the exclusive worship of God alone is insisted upon and guarded with the utmost jealousy, by assurances, by threats, and by promises, as the God who heareth

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prayer, alone to be called upon, alone to be invoked, alone to be adored. Recourse is had (if we may so speak) to every expedient for the express purpose of protecting the sons and daughters of Adam from the fatal error of embracing in their worship any other being or name whatever, or of seeking from any other than the one Supreme God the supply of their wants: not reserving supreme and direct adoration or prayer to Him, and admitting some subordinate honour and indirect inferior mode of invocation to the most exalted of his creatures; but banishing at once and for ever the most distant approximation towards prayer and religious honour, excluding with uncompromising universality the veriest shadow of spiritual invocation to any other being than the Most High, God himself alone.

And with regard to the other principle we read, without any qualifying or limiting expression whatever, "There is One God, and One Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."*—"He is able also to save to the uttermost them who come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."†—Nay, the mouth of Him, who spake as never man spake, thus solemnly and graciously announces the completeness of his own mediation: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you."‡

Entire pages to the same effect might be added. One Mediator has been revealed in his person and in his offices, and he is expressly declared to be the One Mediator between God and man; we therefore seek God's covenanted mercies through him. But (it will

* 1 Tim. ii. 5. † Heb. vii. 25. ‡ John, xvi. 23.

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be asked) is the mediatorship of the Son of God exclusive of all other mediators in heaven? May there not be other mediators of intercession as well as that one Mediator of redemption? We answer, What might have been man's duty, had the Almighty been pleased to give another revelation for man's guidance, is not the question: in the revelation which he has given, we find mention made only of one Mediator. And if it had been his will that we should approach the throne of mercy through any secondary or subsidiary mediators and intercessors, the analogy of his gracious dealings with mankind would compel us to expect a revelation of that will, as clear and unquestionable as that which we know he has vouchsafed of the mediation and intercession of his Son. His own revealed will directs us to pray for our fellow-creatures on earth, and to expect a beneficial effect from the prayers of the faithful upon earth, on our behalf, through the mediation of his blessed Son. To pray for them, therefore, and to seek their prayers, and to wait patiently for an answer, are acts of faith and of duty. But that He will favourably answer the prayers which we might supplicate other intercessors in the unseen world to offer, or which we might offer to Himself through their merits and by their mediation, is nowhere in the covenant. Instead of this, we find no single act, no single word, nothing which even by implication can be forced to sanction any prayer or religious invocation of any kind to any other being except God himself alone; nor any reliance whatever on the mediation or intercession of any being in the unseen world, save only our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

But is not his holy Mother an exception? does not Scripture teach us to infer that the blessed Virgin

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has great present influence and power? and that her intercession and mediation may be sought in prayer addressed to her? We answer, that we find no trace or intimation of anything of the kind. But let us search the Scriptures, and see what has been revealed on this subject.

SECTION II.—THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The first intimation given to us that a woman was, in the providence of God, appointed to be the instrument or channel through which the Saviour of mankind should be brought into the world, was made immediately after the fall, and at the very first day of the dawn of salvation. The authorized English version renders the passage thus: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: IT shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* The Roman Vulgate, instead of the word "*it*," reads "she;" the Septuagint renders it "*he*." But, whichever of the renderings of the Hebrew word be correct, for our present purpose it matters little. Whether the word here originally dictated by the Holy Spirit to Moses be so translated as to refer to the seed of the woman generally, or to the male child, the descendant of the woman, or to the word "woman" itself,—and if the latter, whether it refer to Eve, the mother of every child of a mortal parent, or to the immediate mother of the Redeemer,—no Christian can doubt, that, before the foundations of the earth were laid, it was ordained in the councils of the Eternal Godhead, that the Messiah, the Redeemer of mankind, should be born of a

* Gen. iii. 15.

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woman, and that in the mystery of that incarnation the serpent's head should be bruised; equally indisputable is it, that this prophetic announcement was in progress towards its final accomplishment when the Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary.

The only other reference made in the Old Testament to the mother of our Lord seems to be the celebrated prophecy of Isaiah, about which there can probably arise no controversy affecting the question before us: "A Virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." *

We need not here refer to those applications of Holy Scripture, &c., to the Virgin Mary, (however objectionable and unjustifiable they must appear to us,) which are made both in the authorized services of the Church of Rome, and in manuals of private devotion; because they can never be cited in argument. †

SECTION III.—THE NEW TESTAMENT.

In the New Testament mention by name is made of the Virgin Mary by St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke; and by St. John also in his Gospel, not by name, but as the mother of our Lord; and by no other writer. Neither does St. Paul, in any one of his various Epistles, though he mentions by name many of our Lord's disciples, nor St. James, nor St. Peter, who must often have seen Mary during our Lord's ministry, nor St. Jude, mention her as living, or allude to her as dead; nor does St. John, though, as his own Gospel teaches us, she had been committed to his

* C. vii. 14.

† Such, for example, are the addresses of the Bride in the Song of Solomon: and in the Apocryphal Book of Ecclesiasticus, the Praise of Wisdom.

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care of especial trust, in either of his three Epistles, or in the Revelation, refer to Mary.

The first occasion on which in the New Testament any reference is made to the Virgin Mary, is the Salutation of the Angel, recorded in the opening chapter of St. Luke's Gospel: the last occasion is when she is mentioned by the same Evangelist as "Mary the mother of Jesus," in conjunction with the brethren of our Lord, and with the Apostles and the women, all continuing in prayer and supplication immediately after the Ascension.* Between these two events the name of Mary occurs under a variety of circumstances, on every one of which we shall do well to reflect.

The first occasion is the Salutation of Mary by the Angel, announcing to her that she should be the mother of the Son of God. Undoubtedly no daughter of Eve was ever so distinguished among women; and well does it become us to cherish her memory with affectionate reverence. The words then addressed to her when on earth, with a slight change of expression, are daily addressed to her by the Roman Catholic Church, now that she is removed to the invisible world: "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, [the Vulgate reads it "full of grace,"] the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women." On the substitution of the phrase "full of grace," for "highly favoured," or, as our margin suggests, "graciously accepted, or much graced," little needs be said. It may be regretted, that since the Greek is different here and in the first chapter of St. John, where the words "full of grace" are applied to the only Son of God, a similar distinction had not been preserved in the Roman

* Acts, i. 13, 14.

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translation. The other expression, "Blessed art thou among women," is identically the same with the ascription of blessedness made by an inspired tongue to another daughter of Eve, "Blessed above women," or (as both the Septuagint and the Vulgate render the word) "Blessed among women shall Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, be;"* and in such ascription of blessedness we can see no ground of justification for the posthumous worship of the Virgin Mary. The same observation applies with at least equal strictness to that affecting interview between Mary and her cousin, when Elizabeth, enlightened doubtless by an especial revelation, returned the salutation of Mary by addressing her as the Mother of her Lord; and hailing her visit as an instance of most welcome and condescending kindness: "Whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come unto me?" Members of the Church of England are taught to refer to this event in Mary's life with feelings of delight and gratitude. It was on this occasion that she uttered that beautiful hymn, "The song of the blessed Virgin Mary," which our Church has selected for daily use at evening prayer. These incidents bring before our minds the image of a pure Virgin, humble, pious, obedient, holy: a chosen servant of God—an exalted pattern for her fellow-creatures; but still a fellow-creature and a fellow-servant: a virgin pronounced by an angel to be blessed. But further than this we cannot go. We read of no power, no authority,—neither the office and influence of intercession, nor the authority and right to command,—being ever, even by implication, committed to her; and we dare not of our own minds venture to take for granted a

* Judges, v. 24.

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statement of so vast magnitude, involving associations so awful. We reverence her memory as a holy woman, the Virgin-Mother of our Lord. We cannot supplicate any blessing at her hand: we cannot pray to her for her intercession.

The Angel's announcement to Joseph, whether before or after the birth of Christ, the visit of the Magi, the flight into Egypt, and the return thence, in the record of all of which events by St. Matthew the name of Mary occurs, seem to require no especial attention with reference to the immediate subject of our inquiry, however interesting and important in themselves these events are. To Joseph the Angel speaks of the Virgin as "Mary thy wife." In every other of these cases she is called "the young Child's mother," or "his mother."

In relating the circumstances of Christ's birth, the Evangelist employs no words which seem to call for any particular examination. Joseph went up into the city of David to be taxed, with Mary, his espoused wife; and there she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling-clothes and laid him in a manger. And the shepherds found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. And Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

Between the birth of Christ and the flight into Egypt, St. Luke records an event to have happened by no means unimportant, the presentation of Christ in the Temple.* "And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord." And he, Simeon, "came by the

* Luke, ii. 22.

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Spirit into the Temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God and said, 'Lord,'" &c. "And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, 'Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against, (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.'"* In this incident it is worthy of remark, that Joseph and Mary are both mentioned by name, that they are both called the parents of the young Child, that both are equally blessed by Simeon, and that the good old Israelite, illumined by the spirit of prophecy, when he addresses himself immediately to Mary, speaks only of her future sorrow, and does not even remotely or faintly allude to any exaltation of her above the other daughters of Abraham.† "A sword shall pierce through thine own soul also;" a prophecy, as many ancient fathers interpret the passage, accomplished when she witnessed the sufferings and death of her Son,‡ and her own faith and stedfastness for a time faltered.

The next occasion on which the name of the Virgin Mary is found in Scripture is the memorable visit of herself, her husband, and her son, to Jerusalem, when He was twelve years old. And the manner in which this incident is related by the inspired Evangelist, so far from intimating that Mary was destined to

* Luke, ii. 35. † See De Sacy, vol. xxxii. p. 128.

‡ See, as cited in the latter part of this book, the comments of Basil, Augustine, Jerome, Cyril of Alexandria, and others.

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be an object of worship to the believers in her Son, affords evidence strongly bearing in the contrary direction. Here, again, Joseph and Mary are both called "his parents." Joseph is once mentioned by name, and so is Mary. If the language had been so framed as on purpose to take away all distinction of preference or superiority, it could not more successfully have effected its purpose. Not only so: of the three addresses recorded as having been made by our blessed Lord to his beloved mother (and only three are recorded in the New Testament), the first occurs during this visit to Jerusalem. It was in answer to the remonstrance made by Mary, "Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." "How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (or, "in my Father's house," as some render it.) He makes no distinction here, "Knew YE not?" We may appeal to any dispassionate reasoner to pronounce whether this reproof, couched in these words, countenances the idea that our blessed Lord intended his mother to receive such divine honour from his followers, to the end of time, as the Church of Rome now pays; and whether St. Luke, whose pen wrote this account, could have been cognizant of any such right invested in the Virgin?

The next passage calling for our consideration is that which records the first miracle: "And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; and both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage; and when they wanted wine [when the wine failed], the mother of Jesus saith unto him, 'They have no wine.' Jesus

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saith unto her, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.'"*

We need make no remark on the comments which different writers of the Roman Catholic communion have recommended for the adoption of the faithful. Let the passage be interpreted in any way which enlightened criticism and the analogy of Scripture will sanction, and we may ask, Could any unprejudiced mind, after a careful weighing of the incident, the facts, and the words, in all their bearings, expect that the holy and beloved person, toward whom the meek and tender and affectionate Jesus employed this address, was destined by that omnipotent and omniscient Saviour to become an object of those religious acts with which (as we have seen) the Church of Rome daily approaches her? Indeed, Epiphanius,† as we shall hereafter see more at large, considers our blessed Lord to have employed the word "woman" on this occasion for the express purpose of preserving subsequent believers in his Gospel from an excessive admiration of the Virgin.

We must now advert to an incident recorded with little variety of expression, and with no essential difference, by the first three Evangelists. St. Matthew's, which is the fullest account, is this: "While He yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, 'Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.' But he answered and said unto him that told him, 'Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?' And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples and said, 'Behold my mother and my brethren. For

* John, ii. 1. † On the Collyridian heresy.

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whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." *—Or, as St. Luke expresses it, "And he answered and said unto them, 'My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God and do it.'"† Humanly speaking, could a more favourable opportunity have presented itself to our blessed Lord of referring to his beloved mother in such a manner as to exalt her above her fellow-daughters of Eve? In such a manner, too, as that Christians in after days, when the Saviour's bodily presence should have been taken away from them, and the extraordinary communications of the Spirit of truth should have been withdrawn, might have remembered that he had spoken those things, and have been countenanced by his words in doing her homage. But so far is this from the plain and natural tendency of his words, that, had he of acknowledged purpose intended to guard his disciples to the end of time against supposing that the love and reverence which they felt towards Himself should shew itself in their exaltation of his mother above all created beings, language would with difficulty have supplied words more adapted for that purpose. Nothing in the communication made to him seemed to call for such a remark. A plain message announces to him, as a matter of fact, one of the most common occurrences of daily life; and yet he fixes upon the circumstance as the groundwork, not only of declaring the close union between himself and faithful obedient believers in him, but

* Matt. xii. 46. Luke, viii. 21.

† In a subsequent part of this work the reader will find in what strong language Tertullian and St. Chrysostom, and others, comment upon this, as it appears to them, unjustifiable intrusion of Mary.

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of cautioning all against any superstitious feelings towards those who were nearly allied to him by the ties of his human nature. With reverence we would say, it is as though he desired to record his foreknowledge of the errors into which his disciples were likely to be seduced, warning them beforehand to shun and resist the temptation. The evidence borne by this passage against the offering by Christians of any religious worship to the Virgin on the ground of her having been the mother of our Lord, seems clear, strong, and direct. She was the mother of the Redeemer of the world, and blessed is she among women; but that very Redeemer himself, with his own lips, assures us that every faithful servant of his heavenly Father shall be equally honoured with her, and possess all the privileges which so near and dear a relationship with himself might be supposed to convey: "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" "Behold my mother and my brethren!" "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

We have equal reason to take notice in this place of that most remarkable passage in which our Lord is recorded under different circumstances to have expressed the same sentiments, but in words which seem even more strongly indicative of his desire to prevent any undue exaltation of his mother.* "As he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice and said unto him, 'Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.'" On the truth or wisdom of that exclamation our Lord makes no remark; He refers not to his mother at all; not even to assure them (as St. Augustine and others

* Luke, xi. 27.

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in after-ages taught *), that, however blessed Mary might be in her corporeal conception of the Saviour, yet far more blessed was she because she had borne Him spiritually in her heart. He alludes not to his mother, except for the purpose of immediately fixing the minds of his hearers on the sure and greater blessedness of his faithful disciples to the end of time. "But he said, 'Yea rather [or, as some prefer, 'yea verily and'] blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.'" Again, it must be asked, Could such an exclamation have been met by such a reply, had our Lord's will been to exalt his mother as she is now exalted by the Church of Rome? Rather, we reverently ask, Would he have given this turn to such an address, had he not desired to check any such feeling towards her?

That affecting and edifying incident recorded by St. John, as having taken place whilst the Lord Jesus was hanging on the cross, (an incident which speaks to every one who has a mind to understand and a heart to feel,) brings before us the last occasion on which the name of the Virgin Mary occurs in the Gospels. No paraphrase could add force, or clearness, or beauty, to the narrative of the Evangelist; no exposition could bring out its parts more prominently or powerfully. The calmness and authority of our blessed Lord, his tenderness and affection, his filial love in the very midst of his agony, it is impossible for the pen of man to describe with more heart-stirring and heart-soothing pathos. But not one syllable falls from the lips of Christ, or from the pen of the beloved disciple, which can be construed to imply that our blessed Lord intended Mary to be held by his disciples

* See De Sacy, vol. xxxii. p. 35.

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in such honour as would be shewn in the offering of prayer and praise to her after her dissolution. He, who could by a word have bidden the whole course of nature and of providence to minister, to the health and safety, the support and comfort, of his mother, leaves her to the care of one whom he loved, and whose sincerity and devotedness to him he had, humanly speaking, long experienced. He bids him behave to Mary as he would to his own mother; he bids Mary look to John as to her own son for support and solace. "Now, there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he said unto his mother, 'Woman behold thy son;' then said he to the disciple, 'Behold thy mother.'" And he added no more. If Christ willed that his beloved mother should end her days in peace, removed equally from the want and desolation of widowhood on the one hand, and from splendour and notoriety on the other, nothing could be more natural than such conduct, in such a Being, at such a time. But if his purpose had been to exalt her into an object of religious adoration, that nations should kneel before her, and all people do her homage, and to teach all his followers to look to her as the channel through which the favours and blessing of Heaven were to be conveyed to mankind, then the words and the conduct of our blessed Lord at this hour seem to be inexplicable; and so also would be the words of the Evangelist, closing the narrative, "And from that hour, that disciple took her unto his own home."

Subsequently to this, not one word falls from the pen of St. John which can be made to bear on the

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station, the person, or the circumstances of Mary. After his resurrection, our Saviour remained on earth forty days before he finally ascended bodily into heaven. Many of his interviews and conversations with his disciples during that interval are recorded in the Gospel. Every one of the four Evangelists relates some act or some saying of our Lord on one or more of those occasions. Mention is made by name of Mary Magdalene, of Mary [the mother] of Joses, of Mary [the mother] of James, of Salome, of Peter, of Cleophas, of the disciple whom Jesus loved, at whose home the mother of our Lord then was; of Thomas, of Nathanael, and generally of the eleven. But by no one of the Evangelists is reference made at all, in the Gospels, to Mary, the mother of our Lord, as having been present at any one of those interviews; her name is not alluded to throughout.

SECTION IV.

On one solitary occasion subsequently to Christ's ascension, mention is made of Mary his mother in company with many others, and without any further distinction to separate her from the rest. "And when they were come in [from witnessing the ascension], they went up into an upper room where abode both Peter and James, and John and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alpheus and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."* Not one word is said as to Mary having been present to wit-

* Acts, i. 13.

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ness even the ascension of her blessed Son; we read of no command from our Lord, no wish expressed, no distant intimation to his disciples, that they should shew to her even marks of respect and honour; no allusion is there made to her superiority or pre-eminence. Sixty years at the least are generally considered to be comprehended within the subsequent history of the New Testament before the Apocalypse was written; but neither in the narrative, nor in the Epistles, nor yet in the prophetic part of the Holy Book of truth, is there the most distant allusion to Mary. Of him to whose filial care our dying Lord committed his mother we hear much. John we find putting forth the miraculous power of Christ at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple; we see him imprisoned and arraigned before the Jewish authorities; but not one word is mentioned as to what meanwhile became of Mary. We see John confirming the Church in Samaria; we see him an exile in the island of Patmos; but no mention is made of Mary: nay, though we have three of his Epistles, and the second of them addressed to one whom he loved in the truth, we can trace no single allusion to the mother of our Lord, alive or dead. And, whatever may have been the matter of fact as to St. Paul, neither the many letters of that Apostle, nor the numerous biographical incidents recorded of him, intimate in the most remote degree that he knew anything whatever concerning Mary individually. St. Paul does indeed refer to the human nature of Christ derived from his human mother; and had he been taught by direct revelation, or by his fellow-Apostles (older in the ministry), to entertain towards her such sentiments as the Roman Church now professes to entertain, he could not have found a

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more inviting occasion to give utterance to them. But, instead of thus speaking of the Virgin Mary, he does not even mention her name or condition at all; referring only in the most general way to a daughter of Adam, of whom the Son of God was born: "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons."*

Thus, from a time certainly within a few days of our Saviour's ascension, the inspired volume is totally silent throughout as to Mary, whether in life or in death.

SECTION V.

This absence of evidence in Holy Scripture as to the birth, life, death, glories, and power of the Virgin Mary, seems to have been felt sensibly by many of her most zealous votaries. To supply such want of countenance and of sanction to the honours now paid to her in the Church of Rome, various expedients have been adopted. The doctrine of progressive development has been much relied on; and revelations of her influence and majesty made by herself to many of her most famous worshippers have been alleged; especially are we referred to the Revelations made by the Virgin to St. Bridget.†

But another solution of this difficulty has been offered, on which we shall make no comment; since few probably of the most ardent propagators of the doctrine of development will acknowledge it as their own: "The silence," it is said, "of Holy Scripture as to Mary's birth and circumstances (less being recorded of

* Gal. iv. 4. † Diptycha Mariana, vol. vii. p. 20.

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her than of John the Baptist) was designed, and for this very purpose, to be an encouragement to the votaries of Mary; God, wishing to countenance and second their pious zeal, omitted the record of those particulars which are now celebrated by her worshippers, that they might have ample room for the full exercise of their piety, and for their religious and reasonable invention and propagation of novelties concerning her."

Hence the open confession, (which to us savours of impiety, and of a presumptuous desire to fill up what God himself has not been pleased to reveal,) that, if her Son Jesus had omitted anything concerning Mary, her faithful and zealous servants would supply what was wanting.*

Others however affirm, that though not in Holy Scripture, yet in the early Fathers of the Church the mediation of the Virgin is recognized and taught, and prayers to her for blessings from heaven are sanctioned and prescribed. The chief business of the present work is to shew, that for at least five hundred years the worship of the Virgin had no place or name in the Church. And on this part of our professed object we now enter.

* Diptycha Mariana, vii. p. iv.

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CHAPTER II.

ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.—A.D. 47.

SECTION I.

THE entire worship of the Virgin Mary seems to be built upon a belief in the miraculous removal of her person, body and soul, from earth into heaven, which is called her Assumption; and since this supposed event is not represented by any to have taken place subsequently to the time when the canon of Holy Scripture closes, the present appears the proper place for inquiring into the evidence on which the belief in so wonderful a transaction is built.

By the Church of England festivals are observed in commemoration of two events relating to Mary as the mother of our Lord,— the announcement of the Saviour's birth by the message of an angel, called "The Annunciation of the blessed Virgin Mary;" and the presentation of Christ in the Temple, called also "The Purification of St. Mary the Virgin."

In the first of these solemnities we are taught to pray, that as we have known the incarnation of the Son of God by the message of an angel, so by his cross and passion we may be brought to the glory of his resurrection. In the second we humbly beseech the Divine Majesty, that as his only-begotten Son was presented in the Temple in the substance of our flesh, so we may be presented unto God with pure and clean hearts by the same his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. These days are observed, to commemorate events de-

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clared to us on the most sure warrant of Holy Scripture; and these prayers are primitive and evangelical. They pray to God alone for spiritual blessings, and only through his Son. The second prayer was used in the Church from very early times, and is still retained in the Roman Breviary;* instead of the first,† we unhappily now find there a prayer supplicating that those who use it, "believing Mary to be truly the mother of God, may be aided by her intercession with Him."‡

In the Roman Church, on the other hand, feasts§ are dedicated to the Virgin Mary in which the Church of England cannot join; such as the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, and her Immaculate Conception. It is to be regretted, that by appointing a service and a collect commemorative of the immaculate conception of the Virgin in her mother's womb,‖ and praying that the observance of that solemnity may procure the votaries an increase of peace, the Church of Rome has given countenance and sanction to a novelty and a superstition, against which at its commencement, so recently as the 12th century, St. Bernard ¶ strongly remonstrated with the monks of Lyons; a superstition which has been often defended and explained by arguments and discussions, which, by laying aside all feelings of delicacy, have been in no way profitable to the head or to the heart.

* Hus. Brev. Rom. H. 536.

† This collect also is found in the Roman Missal, as a prayer at the post-communion, though it does not appear in the Breviary.

‡ V. 496.

§ Every Saturday, with few exceptions, throughout the year, is dedicated in the Roman Church to the Virgin Mary; and, without a specific cause to the contrary, the prescribed offices must be performed in public or private.

‖ H. 445. ¶ Ep. 174. Paris, 1632; p. 1538.

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Of all these institutions in honour of the Virgin the feast of the Assumption is, as it were, the crown and the consummation.* Before such a solemn office of praise and worship were ever admitted among the institutions of the religion of truth, its originators and compilers ought to have built on sure grounds; careful, too, should those persons be now who join in the service, and lend it the countenance of their example; more especially should every one sift the evidence well, who undertakes to defend and uphold it, lest they prove at the last to love Rome rather than the truth as it is in Jesus. So solemn, so marked a religious service in the temples and at the altar of Him who is the truth, ought to be founded on most sure warrant of Holy Scripture, or at the least on undisputed historical evidence as to the alleged matter of fact on which it is built,† the certain and acknowledged testimony of the Church from the very times. Those persons incur a momentous responsibility who aid in propagating for religious verities the inventions of men.

SECTION II.

But what is the fact with regard to the assumption of the Virgin Mary? It rests on no authentic history; it

* "The Assumption of the Virgin Mary is the greatest of all the festivals which the Church celebrates in her honour. It is the consummation of all the other great mysteries by which her life was rendered most wonderful. It is the birth-day of her true greatness and glory, and the crown of all the virtues of her whole life, which we admire single in her other festivals."—Alban Butler, vol. viii. p. 175.

† Very different opinions are held by Roman Catholic writers as to the antiquity of this feast. All, indeed, maintain that it is of very ancient introduction; but, while some with Lambecius (lib. viii. p. 286) hold the antiquity of the festival to be so remote that its origin can-

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is supported by no primitive tradition. We find the most celebrated defenders of the Roman Catholic cause, instead of citing such evidence as would carry the faintest semblance of probability, appealing to histories written more than a thousand years after the alleged event, to forged documents, and to vague rumours. It is quite surprising to find them, instead of alleging and establishing by evidence what God is said by them to have done, contenting themselves with asserting his omnipotence in proof that the doctrine implied no impossibility; dwelling on the fitness and reasonableness of his working such a miracle in honour of so distinguished a vessel of mercy; and, whilst they take the fact for granted, substituting, in the place of argument, glowing and poetical descriptions of what might have been the joy in heaven, and what ought to be the feelings of mortals on earth. At every step of the inquiry into the merits of the case the principle recurs to our mind, that, as men really and in earnest looking onward to a life after this, our duty is to inquire, not what God could do, nor what we might pronounce fit that God should do, but what He has done. The very moment a Christian writer betakes himself from evidence to possibilities, he betrays his ignorance of the first principles of Christianity, and throws us back from the sure and certain hope of the Gospel to the "beautiful fable" of Socrates, and

not be traced, thence inferring that it was instituted by a silent and unrecorded act of the Apostles themselves, others (among whom Kollarius, the learned annotator on the opinion of Lambecius) acknowledged that it was introduced by an ordinance of the Church, though not at the same time in all countries of Christendom. That annotator would assign its introduction at Rome to the 4th century, at Constantinople to the 6th, in Germany and France to the 9th.

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his exclamation before his judges, "It were better to be there than here, IF THESE things are true."

We must now inquire into the facts of the case. In the first place, it is by no means agreed upon by the writers on the subject, what was the time, or what was the place, of the Virgin's death. While some have maintained that she breathed her last at Ephesus, the large majority affirm that her departure from this world took place at Jerusalem: and, as to the time of her death, some have assigned it to A.D. 48, (about the time when Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch,*) whilst others refer it to later dates; none, however, fixing it at a period subsequently to that at which the canon of Scripture closes. Epiphanius, indeed, towards the end of the fourth century, reminding us that Scripture is totally and simply silent on the subject as well of Mary's death and burial, as of her having accompanied St. John in his travels or not, without alluding to any known tradition as to her assumption, thus sums up his sentiments: "I dare to say nothing, but after consideration am silent!" † Should any persons have deliberately adopted as the rule of their faith the present practice of the Church of Rome, they will take no interest in the following inquiry; but well-informed members of that Church assure us, that there is a general desire entertained among them to have this and other similar questions examined without prejudice, and the merits calmly placed before them. To such persons this chapter may, perhaps, appear not unworthy of attention. Those who would discard all inquiry on this subject, will find themselves concurring much in opinion with St. Bernard

* Acts, xiv. 26.

† Epiph. vol. i. p. 1043.

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himself, "Exalt her," he says, "who is exalted far above the choir of angels, to the heavenly kingdom. These things the Church sings to me of her, and it has taught me to sing the same things to others. For my part, what I have received from it I am secure in holding and delivering; which also, I confess, I am not OVER-SCRUPULOUS in receiving. I have, in truth, received from the Church, that this day is to be observed with the highest veneration, on which she was TAKEN up from this wicked world, carrying with her into heaven feasts of the most famous joys."*

SECTION III.

With the authorized and enjoined services of the Church of Rome on the 15th of August before us, we now proceed to examine the evidence on which the religious service in honour of the Assumption is founded.

In the Ritual of the Assumption more than twice seven times is it reiterated in a brief space, and with slight variations of expression, that Mary was taken up into heaven; and that, not on any general and indefinite idea of her beatific and glorified state, but with reference to one specific and single act of divine favour, performed at a fixed time, effecting (as it is called) her Assumption "to-day." "To-day Mary the Virgin ascended the heavens. Rejoice because she

* See Lambecius, lib. viii. p. 286. The letter of St. Bernard is addressed to the Canons of Lyons. Paris, 1632; p. 1538. His observations in that letter with the view of discountenancing the rising superstition as to the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary in her mother's womb (a superstition now sanctioned by the Roman Ritual) deserve the serious consideration of every one, when placed in juxtaposition with his sentiments here quoted.

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is reigning with Christ for ever."* "Mary the Virgin is taken up into heaven, to the ethereal chamber, in which the King of kings sits on his starry throne." "The holy Mother of God has been exalted above the choirs of angels to the heavenly realms." "Come let us worship the King of kings, to whose ethereal heaven the Virgin-Mother was taken up to-day." And that it is her bodily ascension, her corporeal assumption into heaven, and not merely the transit of her soul from mortal life to eternal bliss, which the Roman Church maintains and propagates by this service, is put beyond doubt by the service itself.† In the fourth and sixth reading, or lesson, for example, we find these sentences: "She returned not into the earth, but is seated in the heavenly tabernacles How could death devour? how could those below receive? how could corruption invade THAT BODY, in which life was received? For it a direct, plain, and easy path to heaven was prepared."‡

Now, on what authority does this doctrine rest? On what foundation-stone is this religious worship built? The holy Scriptures are utterly and profoundly silent as to the fact, and the time, the manner, and the place of Mary's death. Once after the ascension of our Lord, and that within eight days, we find mentioned the name of Mary, promiscuously with others; after that, no allusion to her is made, in life or in death; and no account, as far as it appears,

* Æst. 595.

† Lambecius, indeed, (B. viii. p. 306,) distinctly affirms that one object which the Church had in view, was to condemn the heresy of those who maintained that the reception of the Virgin into heaven was the reception of her soul only, and not also of her body.

‡ Æst. 603, 604.

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places her death too late for mention to have been made of it in the Acts of the Apostles. The historian Nicephorus Callistus refers it to the fifth year of Claudius, that is, about the year 47; after which time, events through more than fifteen years are recorded in that book of sacred Scripture.

But, closing the holy volume, what light does primitive antiquity enable us to throw on this subject? The earliest testimony quoted by the defenders of the doctrine that Mary was at her death taken up bodily into heaven, is a supposed entry in the Chronicon of Eusebius, opposite the year of our Lord 48. This is cited by Coccius without any remark, and even Baronius rests the date of Mary's assumption upon this testimony. The words referred to are these: "Mary the Virgin, the mother of Jesus, was taken up into heaven, as some write that it has been revealed to them."* Suppose, for one moment, that this came from the pen of Eusebius himself; to what does it amount? A chronologist in the fourth century records that some persons, whom he does not name, not even stating when they lived, had written down, not what they had heard as a matter of fact, or received by tradition, but that a revelation had been made to them of a fact alleged to have taken place nearly three centuries before the time of that writer. But, instead of this passage deserving the name of Eusebius as its author, it is now acknowledged to be a palpable interpolation. Suspicions, one would suppose, must have been at a very remote date suggested as to the genuineness of this sentence. Many manuscripts, especially the seven in the Vatican, were known to contain nothing of the kind; and the Roman

* Vol. i. p. 403.

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Catholic editor of the Chronicon at Bourdeaux, A.D. 1604,* tells us, that he was restrained from expunging it, only because nothing certain as to the assumption of the Virgin could be substituted in its place! Its spuriousness, however, can be no longer a question of dispute or doubt: it is excluded from the Milan edition of 1818, by Angelo Maio and John Zohrab; and no trace of it is to be found in the Armenian version, published by the monks of the Armenian convent near Venice, in 1818.†

The next authority to which we are referred is a letter said to have been written by Sophronius the Presbyter about the commencement of the fifth century.‡ The letter used to be ascribed to Jerome. Erasmus referred it to Sophronius. Baronius says it was written by "an egregious forger of lies,"§ who lived after the heresies of Nestorius and Eutyches had been condemned. Be this as it may; that the letter is of very ancient origin, cannot be doubted. This

* P. 566.

† The author visited their convent while that edition of the Chronicon of Eusebius was in the press; and he can testify to the apparent anxiety of the monks to make it worthy of the patronage of Christians.

‡ The letter is entitled "Ad Paulam et Eustochium de Assumptione B. M. Virginis." It is found in the fifth volume of Jerome's Works, p. 82. Edit. Jo. Martian.

§ Baronius (Cologne, 1609; vol. i. p. 408,) shews great anxiety to detract from the value of this author's testimony, whoever he was; sharply criticising him because he asserts that the faithful in his time still expressed doubts as to the fact of Mary's assumption. By assigning, however, to the letter a still later date than the works of Sophronius, Baronius adds force to the argument for the comparatively recent origin of the tradition of her assumption. See Fabricius (Hamburgh, 1804), vol. ix. p. 160.

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document would lead us to conclude, that, so far from the tradition regarding the Virgin's Assumption being general in the Church, it was a point of grave doubt and discussion among the faithful, many of whom thought it an act of pious forbearance to abstain altogether from pronouncing any opinion on the subject. Whoever penned the letter, and whether we look to the sensible and pious sentiments contained in it, or to its undisputed antiquity, the following extract cannot fail to be interesting:

"Many of our people doubt whether Mary was taken up together with her body, or went away, leaving the body. But how, or at what time, or by what persons, her holy body was taken hence, or whither removed, or whether it rose again, is not known; although some will maintain that she is already revived, and is clothed with a blessed immortality with Christ in heavenly places: which very many affirm also of the blessed John the Evangelist, his servant, to whom, being a virgin, the Virgin was intrusted by Christ; because in his sepulchre, as it is reported, nothing is found but manna, which also is seen to flow forth. Nevertheless, which of these opinions should be thought the more true, we doubt. Yet it is better to commit all to God, to whom nothing is impossible, than to wish to define rashly by our own authority, anything which we do not approve of.* Because nothing is impossible with God, we do not deny that something of the kind was done with regard to the blessed Virgin Mary; although for caution's sake, salvâ fide, preserving our faith, we ought rather with pious desire to think, than

* These words, stamping the writer's own opinion, "which we do not approve of," are omitted by Coccius in his quotation.

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inconsiderately to define what without any danger may remain unknown."*

This letter, at the earliest, was not written until the beginning of the fifth century.

Subsequent writers were not wanting to supply what this letter declares to have been, at its own date, unknown, as to the manner and time of Mary's assumption, and the persons employed in effecting it. The first authority appealed to in defence of the tradition is usually cited as a well-known work written by Euthymius, who was contemporary with Juvenal, Archbishop of Jerusalem; and the testimony simply quoted as his, offers to us the following account of the reputed miraculous transaction:†

"It has been above said that the holy Pulcheria built many churches to Christ at Constantinople. Of these, however, there is one which was built in Blachernæ, in the beginning of [the reign of] Marcian of divine memory. These, therefore, namely, Marcian and Pulcheria, when they had built a venerable temple to the greatly to be celebrated and most holy Mother of God and ever Virgin Mary, and had decked it with all ornaments, sought her most holy body, which had conceived God. And having sent for Juvenal, Archbishop of Jerusalem, and the Bishops of Palestine, who were living in the royal city, on account of the synod then

* It is a curious fact, that, at the close of the fifth century, (A.D. 494,) the Roman Council, with Pope Gelasius at its head, among the books not received, specifies as Apocryphal "the book which is called the Transitus, that is, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin."—P. 1264.

† The version of Coccius (who heads the extract merely with these words, "Euthumius Eremita. Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ lib. iii. c. 40) differs in some points from the original. Jo. Damas. vol. ii. p. 879.

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held at Chalcedon, they say to them, 'We hear that there is in Jerusalem the first and famous Church of Mary, Mother of God and ever Virgin, in the garden called Gethsemane, where her body which bore the Life was deposited in a coffin. We wish, therefore, her relics to be brought here for the protection of this royal city.' But Juvenal answered, 'In the holy and divinely-inspired Scripture, indeed, nothing is recorded of the departure of the holy Mary, Mother of God. But from an ancient and most true tradition we have received, that, at the time of her glorious falling asleep, all the holy Apostles, who were going through the world for the salvation of the nations, in a moment of time, borne aloft, came together to Jerusalem; and, when they were near her, they had a vision of angels, and divine melody of the highest powers was heard; and thus, with divine and more than heavenly glory, she delivered her holy soul into the hands of God in an unspeakable manner. But that which had conceived God, being borne with angelic and apostolic psalmody, with funeral rites, was deposited in a coffin in Gethsemane. In this place the chorus and singing of the angels continued for three whole days. But after three days, on the angelic music ceasing, since one of the Apostles had been absent, and came after the third day, and wished to adore the body that had conceived God, the Apostles who were present opened the coffin; but the body, pure and every way to be praised, they could not at all find. And when they found only those things in which it had been laid out and placed there, and were filled with an ineffable fragrancy proceeding from those things, they shut the coffin. Being astonished at the miraculous mystery, they could form no other thought but that He who in

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his own person had vouchsafed to be clothed with flesh, and to be made man of the most holy Virgin, and to be born in the flesh,—God the Word, and Lord of Glory,—and who after birth had preserved her virginity immaculate, had seen it good, after she had departed from among the living, to honour her uncontaminated and unpolluted body by a translation before the common and universal resurrection.'"

Such is the passage offered us in its insulated form as an extract from Euthymius! Doubt and uncertainty hang over this page of ecclesiastical history: no doubt as to the credibility of the tradition—that tradition cannot be maintained; but great doubt, thickening every step as we proceed, with regard to the genuineness and authenticity of the works in which the tradition is reported to have been preserved. The work from which the above narrative is said to be extracted is lost; an epitome only of that work has come down to our time, and in that epitome no trace of the tradition is discoverable!

SECTION IV

We believe that the earliest author, in whose reputed works the tradition is found, is John Damascenus, a monk of Jerusalem, who flourished somewhat before the middle of the eighth century. The passage occurs in the second of three homilies on "The Sleep of the Virgin," a term generally used by the later Greeks as an equivalent for the Latin word "Assumptio."

The publication of these homilies in Greek and Latin is comparatively of late date. Lambecius,* A.D. 1655, says he was not aware that any one had so

* Vol. viii. p. 281.

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published them before his time.* But, not to raise the question of their genuineness, the preacher's introduction of this passage into his homily is preceded by a very remarkable section, affording a striking example of the manner in which Christian orators used to indulge in addresses and appeals, not only to the spirits of departed men, but even to things which never had life. Here the speaker in his sermon addresses the tomb of Mary, as though it had ears to hear, and an understanding to comprehend; and then he represents the tomb as having a tongue to answer, and as calling forth from the preacher and his congregation an address of admiration and reverence.

Such apostrophes as these cannot be too steadily borne in mind, or too carefully weighed, when any argument is sought to be drawn from similar salutations offered by ancient Christian orators to Saint, or Angel, or the Virgin.

The following are among the expressions in which this preacher addresses the tomb of the Virgin: "Thou, O Tomb, of holy things most holy (for I will address thee as a LIVING BEING), where is the much-desired and much-beloved body of the Mother of God?"† The answer of the tomb begins thus: "Why seek ye her in a tomb, who has been taken up on high to the heavenly tabernacles?" In reply to this, the preacher, first deliberating with his hearers what answer he should make, thus addresses the tomb: ‡ "Thy grace indeed is never-failing, and eternal," &c. By the maintainers of the invocation of Saints, many a passage far more equivocal and indirect, and less cogent than this,

* Le Quien, who published them in 1712, refers to earlier homilies on the Dormitio Virginis. Jo. Damas. Paris, 1712, vol. ii. p. 857.

† Vol. ii. p. 875. ‡ P. 881.

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which a preacher here addresses to stone and earth, has been adduced to prove that saints and martyrs were invoked by primitive worshippers. John Damascenus thus introduces the passage of Euthymius: "Ye see, beloved fathers and brethren, what answer the all-glorious tomb makes to us, and in proof that these things are so, in the Euthymiac history, the third book and fortieth chapter is thus written word for word." * He does not say, "the history written by Euthymius," nor "the history concerning Euthymius," but "the Euthymiac history."

Lambecius maintains that the history here quoted by John of Damascus was not an ecclesiastical history written by Euthymius, who died A. D. 472, but a biographical history concerning Euthymius himself, written by an ecclesiastic, whom he supposes to be Cyril the monk, who died A. D. 531. This opinion of Lambecius is combated by Cotelerius; the discussion only adding to the denseness of the mist, which envelopes the whole from first to last. But whether Euthymius were the author or the subject of the work, the work itself is lost; an epitome only survives; and in that abridgement no trace is found of the passage quoted by John of Damascus.

Le Quien, the editor of the works of John of Damascus, offers some very interesting remarks bearing immediately on the agitated question, as to the first institution of the feast of the Assumption, as well as on the tradition itself. He infers from the words of Modestus, Patriarch of Jerusalem, that scarcely any preachers before him had addressed their congregations on the departure of the Virgin out of this life; he thinks, that the feast of the Assumption was at the

* P. 877.

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commencement of the seventh century only recently instituted. Whilst all later writers affirm that the Virgin was buried in the Valley of Jehosaphat, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Le Quien observes, that this could not have been known to Jerome, who passed a great part of his life in Bethlehem, and yet observes a total silence on the subject: though, in his "Epitaph on Paula," he enumerates all the places in Palestine distinguished by any remarkable event. Neither, he adds, could it have been known to Epiphanius, who, though he lived long in Palestine, yet declares that nothing was known as to the death or burial of the Virgin.

Again, Le Quien, in his remarks upon the writings falsely attributed to Melito, says, that since the Pseudo-Melito speaks many jejune things of the Virgin, (such, for example, as at the approach of death, her exceeding great fear of being exposed to the wiles of Satan,) he concludes, from that circumstance, that the work was written before the Council of Ephesus; alleging this remarkable reason, that "after that time there BEGAN to be entertained, as was right, not only in the east, but also in the west, a far better estimate of the Mother of God."

This editor insinuates the possibility of Juvenal (whose character he makes no scruple to stigmatize) having invented the whole story, in order for his own sinister purposes to deceive Marcian and Pulcheria; just (he says) as Juvenal forged certain writings for the purpose of securing to himself the primacy of Jerusalem — a crime laid to the charge of Juvenal by Leo the Great, in his letter to Maximus, Bishop of Antioch.*

* P. 879. See also Leo's Works, vol. i. p. 1215, Epist. cxix., where we still find the charge referred to by Le Quien.

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It is much to be lamented, that, in quoting the extracts from John of Damascus, those who employ his work as evidence of primitive belief have not presented the extract to their readers whole and entire. Garbled quotations are always unsatisfactory; and, in the present instance, the paragraphs omitted carry in themselves clear proof that Juvenal's answer, as it now appears in John of Damascus, could not have been made to Marcian and Pulcheria by Juvenal, because in it is quoted a passage from "Dionysius the Areopagite"* by name, still found in the works ascribed to him, but which, as we are compelled to believe, did not make their appearance in Christendom till the beginning of the sixth century, that is, fifty years after the Council of Chalcedon, for the purpose of being present at which Juvenal is said to have been resident in Constantinople when the emperor and empress held the alleged conversation with him. The remainder of the passage from the history of Euthymius, rehearsed in this oration of John of Damascus, is very obscure and very strange. In it James is called "the brother of God" [adelphotheos]; and it ends by telling us that the royal personages, having heard the report, requested of Juvenal, "that the holy coffin, with the clothes of the glorious and all-holy Mary, Mother of God, sealed up, might be sent to them"—and they "deposited them in the venerable temple of the Mother of God built in Blachernæ."

Of the lessons appointed by the Church of Rome for the feast of the Assumption, to be read to believers as-

* Cardinal Bellarmin maintains the genuineness of these works, though he acknowledges that they were never quoted before the time of Gregory the Great. He supposes that they had been lost, and were only discovered just before that Pope's time! De Eccles. Script.

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sembled in God's house of prayer, three are selected and taken entirely from this very oration of John of Damascus.*

SECTION V.

This, then, is the account of the Virgin's assumption NEAREST to the time: and can any thing be more vague, and, in point of testimony, more utterly worthless? It stands thus. A writer near the middle of the sixth century refers to a conversation said to have taken place a hundred years before; in which, at Constantinople, the Bishop of Jerusalem is said to have informed the Emperor of an ancient tradition concerning a miraculous event nearly four hundred years before,—that the body of Mary was taken out of the coffin without the knowledge of those who had deposited it there; whilst the primitive and inspired account (recording most minutely the journeys and proceedings of some of those very persons, before and subsequently to the supposed event, and the letters of others,) makes no mention at all of any transaction of the kind; and, of all the intermediate historians and writers of every character, not one gives the slightest intimation that any rumour of it had ever reached them.

Another authority to which the writers on the assumption of the Virgin appeal is Nicephorus Callistus, who, at the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century, dedicated his work

* The fourth lesson begins, "Hodie sacra et animata arca;" the fifth, "Hodie Virgo immaculata;" the sixth, "Eva quæ serpentis."—Æ. 603. These contain the passages to which we have referred as fixing the belief of the Church of Rome in the CORPOREAL assumption of Mary.

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to Andronicus Palæologus.* This Nicephorus was Patriarch of Constantinople about the reign of our Edward I. or Edward II., and cannot be quoted, in any sense of the word, as an ancient author writing on the events of the primitive ages; and yet the manner in which his testimony is cited by Roman Catholic authors would lead us to suppose him to be a man to whose evidence on early ecclesiastical affairs we are now expected to defer. His account is this:† "In the fifth year of Claudius, the Virgin, at the age of 59, was made acquainted with her approaching death. Christ himself then descended from heaven with a countless multitude to take up the soul of his mother; summoning his disciples by thunder and storm from all parts of the world. The Virgin then bade Peter first, and afterwards the rest of the Apostles to come with burning torches. The Apostles surrounded her bed, and an outpouring of miracles flowed forth. The blind beheld the sun, the deaf heard, the lame walked, and every disease fled away. The Apostles and others sung as the body was borne from Sion to Gethsemane, angels preceding, surrounding, and following it. A wonderful thing then took place.‡ The Jews were in-

* Baronius does not appear to have referred to the history of Euthymius; but he refers to Nicephorus, and also to a work ascribed to Melito, c. iv. v.

† Nicephorus, Paris, 1630; vol. i. p. 168, lib. ii. c. xxi. Baronius also refers to lib. xv. c. xiv.

‡ This tradition seems to have been much referred to at the time just preceding our English Reformation. In a volume called "The Hours of the most blessed Mary, according to the legitimate rite of the Church of Salisbury," printed in Paris, in 1526, the frontispiece gives an exact representation of the story at the moment of the Jew's hands being cut off. They are severed at the wrist, and lying on the coffin, on which also his arms are resting. In the sky the Virgin appears between the Father and the Son, the holy dove being seen above her.

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dignant and enraged; and one, more desperately bold than the rest, rushed forward, intending to throw down the holy corpse to the ground. Vengeance was not tardy, for his hands were cut off from his arms. The procession stopped; and at the command of Peter, on the man shedding tears of penitence, his hands were joined on again, and were restored whole. At Gethsemane she was put into a tomb, but her Son transferred her to the divine habitation." *

Nicephorus then refers to Juvenal as the authority on which the tradition was received, that the Apostles opened the coffin, to enable St. Thomas (the one stated to have been absent) to embrace the body; and he proceeds to describe the personal appearance and looks of the Virgin.

It would be an unnecessary trespass on the patience of any reader, to dwell and comment on such evidence as this. And yet on this evidence one of the most solemn religious festivals in the Church of Rome, the crown and consummation of the rest, is built. Is it within the verge of credibility, that, had such an event as Mary's assumption taken place under the extraordinary circumstances which now invest the tradition, or under any combination of circumstances whatever, there would have been a total silence respecting it in the Holy Scriptures? that the writers of the first four centuries should never have referred to such a fact? that the first writer to allude to it should have lived in the middle of the fifth century, or later? and that he should have declared, in a letter to his contemporaries, that the subject was one on which many doubted; and that he himself would not deny it, not because it rested on probable evidence, but be-

* Vol. i. p. 171.

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cause nothing is impossible with God? and that nothing was known as to the time, the manner, or the persons concerned, even had the assumption taken place? Can we place any confidence in the relation of a writer in the middle of the sixth century as to a tradition of what an archbishop attending the Council of Chalcedon had told the sovereign at Constantinople, concerning a tradition of what was said to have happened nearly four hundred years before; whilst in the Acts of that council not the faintest trace is found of any allusion to the supposed fact or the alleged tradition, though the transactions of that council in many of its most minute details are recorded, and though its discussions brought the name and circumstances of the Virgin Mary continually, and with most lively interest, before the minds of all who attended it?

This last fact is a most important point, and will be resumed when in the chronological order of evidence we come to examine into the testimony borne, on the general subject before us, by the records of that Council of Chalcedon, and the other councils connected with it.

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PART III.

EVIDENCE OF THE EARLY CHURCH DOWN TO THE COUNCIL OF NICÆA.

CHAPTER I.

ANCIENT CREEDS AND THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS.

SECTION I.

In pursuing our inquiry into the lawfulness of the worship of the Virgin Mary in the Church of Rome, we are led to examine the evidence of Christian antiquity, not by any misgiving, lest the testimony of Scripture might appear defective or doubtful, far less by any idea of God's word needing the support of man's suffrage. On the contrary, the voice of God in his revealed word seems to us to give no faint or uncertain sound, as it warns us against the lawfulness of a Christian offering prayers, or any religious worship, or any invocation, to the Virgin Mary; and it must be a fixed principle in the Christian's creed, that where God's written word is clear and certain, human evidence cannot be weighed against it. When the Lord hath spoken, well does it become the whole earth to be silent before him; when the Eternal Judge himself hath decided, the witness of man bears on its very face the stamp of incompetency and presumption. But in testing the soundness of our interpretation of God's written word, the works of the earliest writers of the Christian Church are most valuable; and in our investigation of the prevalence of

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any doctrine or practice in primitive times, those ancient records are indispensable.

Now let it be supposed, that instead of the oracles of God's revelation having spoken against the doctrine and practice of offering prayer or religious worship to any being but God alone, the question had been left in Scripture an open question; then what evidence would have been deducible from the writings of the primitive Church for the worship of the Virgin? What testimony do the first ages, after the canon of Scripture was closed, bear upon this point? When we of the Church of England religiously abstain from the presentation of any address of the nature of prayer or supplication, entreaty, request, or any invocation of whatever kind, and from any acts of religious worship and praise to Mary, are we, or are we not, treading in the steps of the first Christians, and adhering to the very pattern which they set? Do not members of the Church of Rome by such acts of worship, directed to the Virgin Mary, as we find in their authorized and appointed liturgies, and in their works of private devotion, depart as far and as decidedly from the model of primitive Christianity as they do from the plain sense of Holy Scripture? The result of a careful examination of the body of Christian writers is this, that at least through the first five centuries the worship of the Virgin, now insisted upon by the Council of Trent, prescribed by the Roman Ritual, and actually practised in the Church of Rome, had neither name, nor place, nor existence among Christians. The writers who lived in those times never refer to the worship of the Virgin as a practice with which they were familiar; and the principles which they habitually maintain, and the sentiments with which their

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works abound, are utterly irreconcileable with such a practice.

Among those indeed who adhere to the Tridentine Confession of Faith, there are persons on whom such an investigation would not be allowed to exercise any influence. The sentiments of the celebrated Huet, wherever they are adopted, would operate to the rejection of such inquiries as we are now instituting. His words on the immaculate conception of the Virgin are of far wider application than the immediate occasion on which he used them: "That the blessed Mary never conceived any sin in herself, is in the present day an established principle in the Church, and confirmed by the Council of Trent; in which it is our duty to acquiesce, rather than in the dicta of the ancients, if any of them seem to think otherwise, among whom must be numbered Origen."*

In the present work, however, we take for granted that the reader is still open to conviction, desirous of arriving at the truth, and, as one efficient means of attaining it, ready to sift honestly and patiently the evidence of the PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

SECTION II.—THE ANCIENT CREEDS.

Before we proceed to inquire into the evidence afforded by individual writers, either in their own recorded sentiments, or with reference to the prevailing belief and practice of their age, it will not be here out of place to observe, that, in the most ancient creeds there is no intimation whatever of any idea being then entertained as to the posthumous exaltation of the Virgin, her assumption into heaven, the invoca-

* Origen's Works, vol. iv. part ii. p. 156.

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tion of her name, reliance on her merits and patronage, or belief in her intercession. Many creeds are recorded in the early writers, in which the incarnation of the Son of God is invariably an article never omitted, and in some cases it is dwelt upon largely; but the phrases employed allude to no dignity of his mother's nature, no mediatorial office assigned to her, no power of benefiting mankind granted to her, nor any adoration of her name. The three creeds usually employed in the Church now may be regarded as affording conjointly a fair specimen of the language and sentiments of the rest, some of which mention the Virgin by name, others not alluding to her further than as St. Paul does,—"born of a woman." "He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary;"* "He was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary;"† "God of the substance of his Father, begotten before the worlds; and man of the substance of his mother, born in the world."‡ Thus some of the ancient creeds say, "born of a Virgin;" others, "born of Mary;" others, "born of the holy Virgin Mary;" not one referring to her except as the mother of the Incarnate Word, without any allusion to her dignity, or authority, or present state: and in this respect they all differ essentially from the creed of Pope Pius IV., to the belief in the truth of which ministers of the Church of Rome are bound, as containing articles of faith, without which there is no salvation.§ That creed not only announces that the saints reigning with Christ are to be worshipped and invoked, but, whilst it asserts that generally due honour and worship must be paid to images

* Apostles' Creed. † Nicene Creed. ‡ Athanasian Creed.
§ Catechismus ad Parochos. Lugduni, 1686; p. 521.

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of other saints, joins in a marked manner the images of "Christ and the Virgin Mary" together, in contradistinction to the others. Of such things as these there is no more trace to be found in any of the ancient creeds than in the Holy Scriptures themselves.*

SECTION III.—EVIDENCE OF THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS.

In sifting the testimony of the most ancient writers of the primitive Church, it will be necessary, for the satisfaction of all parties, that we examine, in the first place, those ancient writings which are ascribed to an Apostle, or to fellow-labourers of the Apostles, familiarly known as "the Apostolic Fathers." They are five in number: Barnabas, Clement, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp. Some of these works have been generally considered spurious, others have been as generally pronounced genuine. The question, however, of their genuineness, though in itself deeply interesting, will little affect their testimony on the subject before us: whether written or not by the pen of those to whom antiquity has referred them, they are witnesses of the opinions and practices current at the time of their composition. No one can reasonably doubt that they were all in existence long before the Council of Nicæa; whilst some of them with greatest probability may be referred to a point of time within the first century after our Lord's death, or even after his birth. With all their errors, and blemishes, and interpolations, taken at the worst;—after every reasonable deduction for defects in taste, and style, and

* We need not here allude to what are called Ancient Liturgies, because none of those whose reputed dates fall within the five hundred years embraced in the present treatise can even with the greatest latitude of admission be regarded as genuine.

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matter, these writings are too venerable for their antiquity, too often appealed to with respect and affection by some who have been among the brightest ornaments of the Christian Church, and contain too copious a store of evangelical truth, sound principle, primitive simplicity, and pious sentiment, to admit of their being passed over with levity or neglect.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. BARNABAS.

In this work,* written probably by a converted Jew about the close of the first century, or certainly before the middle of the second, we search in vain for any trace of the worship or invocation of any being except God alone. The writer gives directions on the subject of prayer; he speaks of angels as the ministers of God; he speaks of the reward of the righteous at the day of judgement: but he suggests not the semblance of a supposition that he either held the doctrine himself which the Church of Rome now holds with regard to the Virgin Mary, or was aware of its existence among Christians.

Among his many valuable rules for a Christian's guidance we read, "Thou shalt preserve what thou hast received, neither adding thereto, nor taking therefrom. Thou shalt not come with a bad conscience to thy prayer." The closing sentences contain this blessing:

"Now God, who is the Lord of all the world, give to you wisdom, skill, understanding, knowledge of his judgements, with patience. And be ye taught of God, seeking what the Lord requires of you; and do it, that ye may be saved in the day of judgement. The Lord of glory and of all grace be with your spirit. Amen." †

* The edition here used is that of Cotelerius, revised by Le Clerc. Antwerp, 1698.

† Pp. 50. 52.

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In this writer there is no mention whatever made of the Virgin Mary.

SHEPHERD OF HERMAS.

This work, deriving its name from the circumstance of an angelic teacher being represented as a shepherd, is now considered by many to have been the production of Hermas, a brother of Pius, Bishop of Rome;* though others are persuaded that it is of a much earlier date. The writer speaks much of prayer; but not the faintest hint occurs throughout the three books, of which the work consists, that he had any idea of worship or prayer of any kind being offered to any created being.

The following passage, found in the Greek quotation from Hermas made by Antiochus (Hom. 85), the Latin of which is now read in the second book, ninth mandate, is part only of a section, the whole of which will repay a careful perusal.

"Let us then remove from us doubleheartedness and faintheartedness, and never at all doubt of supplicating anything from God, nor say within ourselves, How can I, who have been guilty of so many sins against Him, ask of the Lord and receive? But with all thine whole heart turn to the Lord, and ask of him without doubting; and thou shalt know his great mercy, that he will not forsake thee, but will fulfil the desire of thy soul;"† with much to the same effect, contrasting very strongly with the modern doctrine of approaching Christ through Mary.

In the twelfth section of the ninth similitude, the Latin (the Greek being lost) contains this passage:

* The appointment of Pius to the see of Rome is generally referred to the year 153.

† Book iii. sim. 2.

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"These all are messengers to be reverenced for their dignity. By these, therefore, as it were by a wall, the Lord is girded round. But the GATE is the Son of God, WHO IS THE ONLY WAY to God. For no one shall enter in to God, except by his Son."

How sad a degeneracy has crept into that Church, which now addresses Mary as "the gate of heaven," and implores her to be "our way to God!"

This primitive writer will not suffer us to be deterred by any consciousness of our own transgressions from approaching God himself directly and immediately ourselves; but he bids us draw near to the mercy-seat of our heavenly Father, through his only Son our only Mediator.

In his works no allusion whatever is made to the Virgin Mary.

ST. CLEMENT, BISHOP OF ROME.

It is impossible to read the testimony borne by Eusebius,* and other ancient writers, to the character and circumstances of Clement, without becoming interested in whatever production of his pen may have escaped the ravages of time. "Third from the Apostles," (says Eusebius,) "Clement obtained the bishopric of Rome; one who had seen the Apostles and conversed with them, and had still the sound of their preaching in his ears, and their tradition before his eyes."†

Clement's first epistle to the Corinthians is considered by many as the only genuine work of his now extant. Archbishop Wake sees reason to believe that it was written about A.D. 70; others assign it a date twenty years later. St. Jerome speaks of it in high terms of

* Euseb. Eccles. Hist. v. c. 6.

† See St. Paul to the Philippians, c. iv. v. 3.

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admiration, and few will read it now without assenting to his judgment, that it is a very useful and admirable work.* A delightful tone of primitive simplicity pervades it. His testimony to our redemption by the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and to the life-giving influences of the Holy Spirit, is clear, direct, and repeated. Perhaps in our present inquiry this epistle of Clement becomes even more interesting, as the pastoral letter of one of the earliest bishops of that Church whose present belief and practice we are now testing by the evidence of primitive times. In his writings diligent search has been made for any expression which (as to the point at issue) might throw light upon the tenets and practices whether of Clement himself, of the Church in whose name he wrote, the Church whose members he addressed, or the Catholic Church at large. But so far from a single word occurring which would lead us to suppose that he was cognizant of any invocation of the Virgin, or any reliance on her intercession prevailing among Christians, his evidence is more than negative against it. Clement speaks of Angels; he speaks of the holy men of old who pleased God,—Enoch, Abraham, David, Elijah, and Job; he bids us think on Peter and Paul, to look to them all with reverence and gratitude, in order that we may imitate their good examples. He speaks of prayer; he urges on all the duty of prayer; he specifies the object of our prayers; he particularizes the subjects of our prayers; but he speaks only of prayer to God in the name and for the sake of his blessed Son. Of any other mediator or intercessor Clement seems to have had no knowledge.

* Cat. Script. Eccles. Jerom. vol. iv. part. ii. p. 107. Edit. Benedict. Paris, 1706.

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Clement speaks of the Lord Jesus having descended from Abraham according to the flesh; but he makes no mention of that daughter of Abraham of whom Christ was born.

The following are a few among many passages selected in furtherance of our present inquiry:

"Let us venerate the Lord Jesus, whose blood was given for us."*

"Let us approach him in holiness of soul, lifting up holy and undefiled hands towards him; loving our merciful and tender Father, who hath made us a portion of his elect."†

"This is the way, beloved, in which we find Jesus Christ our salvation, the Chief-priest of our offerings, our Protector, and the Succourer of our weakness. By him let us look steadfastly to the heights of heaven; by him let us behold his most high and spotless face; by him the eyes of our hearts are opened; by him our ignorant and darkened minds shoot forth into his marvellous light; by him the Supreme Governor willed that we should taste immortal knowledge; who, being the brightness of his magnificence, is so much greater than the Angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."‡

"The all-seeing God, the Sovereign Ruler of spirits, and the Lord of all flesh, who hath chosen the Lord Jesus, and us through him to be a peculiar people, grant to every soul, that calleth on his glorious and holy name, faith, fear, peace, patience, long-suffering, self-control, purity, and temperance, to the good pleasure of his name, through our High-priest and Protector, Jesus Christ; through whom to him be glory

* C. 21. † C. 29. ‡ C. 36.

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and majesty, dominion and honour, now and for ever and ever, world without end. Amen." *

Clement of Rome makes no mention of the Virgin Mary.

SAINT IGNATIUS.

This martyr set the seal of his blood to the truth about seventy years after the death of our Lord. From Antioch of Syria, of which place he was the bishop, he was sent to the imperial city, Rome; and there, not with resignation only to the divine will, but with joy and gladness, he ended his mortal career by a death for which he had been long prepared. His epistles are written with much of the florid colouring of Asiatic eloquence; but they have all the raciness of originality, and they glow with that fervour of Christian charity which compels us to love him as our father and friend in Christ.

A careful study of this holy man's literary remains brings to light no single trace of any invocation of the Virgin. Whether in their genuine form, or in the paraphrase which has often passed for the original, but which is the work of a subsequent age, we search in vain for any intimation, either of his own belief in Mary's influence and power, her patronage and intercession, or of his acquaintance with the existence of any such religious opinion in others. One or two specimens of his genuine epistles, and of their paraphrase, will suffice. The following bear the most closely on our subject:

"There is one Physician, both of a corporeal and of a spiritual nature; begotten, and not begotten; God in the flesh; true Life in death; both from Mary and

* C. 58.

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from God; first liable to suffering, and then incapable of suffering."*

The paraphrase of this passage stands thus:

"Our Physician is the only True God, ungenerated and unapproachable, the Lord of all things, the Father and Generator of the only-begotten Son. We have also, as our Physician, our Lord God, Jesus Christ, who was before the world, the only-begotten Son and the Word, but also afterwards Man of the Virgin Mary, for the Word was made flesh."†

In the same epistle to the Ephesians, he speaks of our Lord as "Son of God, and Son of Man, according to the flesh of the seed of David."‡

In his epistle to the Magnesians we find these words: "At one place be there one prayer and one supplication, one mind, one hope in love, in blameless rejoicing: Jesus Christ is one, than which nothing is better. All then throng as to one temple, as to one altar, as to one Jesus Christ, who proceeded from one Father, and is in one, and returned to one." Again, he says: "Remember me in your prayers, that I may attain to God: I am in need of your prayer united in God, and of your love."

In the paraphrase on the epistle to the Philadelphians, among much interesting matter, we read these sentences:

"One is the God of the Old and the New Testament. One is the Mediator between God and man, for the production of the creatures endued with reason and perception, and for the provision of what is useful and adapted to them: and One is the Comforter, who wrought in Moses, and the Prophets, and the Apostles.

* Epist. to Ephes. p. 13. sect. 5–7. † P. 48. C. 7.
‡ P. 17. sect. 20.

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All the Saints, therefore, were saved in Christ, hoping in him, and waiting for him; and through him they obtained salvation, being Saints worthy of love and admiration; having acquired a testimony from Jesus Christ in the Gospel of our common hope."*

In his epistle to the Romans he speaks to them of his own prayer to God, and repeatedly implores them to pray to Christ for him. He prays for his fellow-labourers in the Lord; he implores them to approach the Throne of Grace with supplications for mercy on his own soul.†

Of the worship of the Virgin Mary, of any invocation of her name, of any reliance on her mediation and intercession, Ignatius appears to have been utterly ignorant.

And this brings us beyond the close of the first century.

SAINT POLYCARP.

The only remaining name among those who have been reverenced as Apostolical Fathers is the venerable Polycarp. He suffered martyrdom by fire, at a very advanced age, in Smyrna, about one hundred and thirty years after our Saviour's death. Only one epistle from this holy man's pen has survived. It is addressed to the Philippians, and in it he speaks to his brother Christians of prayer, constant, incessant prayer: but the prayer of which he speaks is supplication only to God; to any other religious invocation he never alludes. In this epistle he admonishes virgins how they ought to walk with a spotless and chaste conscience, but he makes no mention of the Virgin Mary.

* P. 81. sect. 5. † P. 28. sect. 4.

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Before we close our examination of the recorded sentiments of the Apostolical Fathers, we must advert, though briefly, to the epistle generally received as the genuine letter from the Church of Smyrna to the neighbouring churches, narrating the martyrdom of Polycarp. With some variations from the copy generally circulated, the letter is preserved in the works of Eusebius. On the subject of our present research its evidence is not merely negative: it purports to contain not only the sentiments of the contemporaries of Polycarp who witnessed his death, and dictated the letter, but also the very words of the martyr himself in the last prayer which he ever offered on earth. So far from countenancing the invocation of any being save God alone, or relying upon any one's advocacy and intercession except only Christ's, the letter contains a very remarkable and very interesting passage which bears directly against all exaltation of a mortal into an object of religious worship. A few extracts must suffice:

"The Church of God, which is in Smyrna, to the Church in Philomela, and to all branches of the holy Catholic Church dwelling in any place, mercy, peace, and love of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ be multiplied."*

Before his death Polycarp offered this prayer, or rather this thanksgiving, to God for his mercy in deeming him worthy to suffer death for the truth.

"Father of thy beloved and blessed Son, Jesus Christ, by whom we have received our knowledge concerning thee, the God of Angels and power, and of the whole creation, and of the whole family of the just who live before thee; I bless thee because thou

* Euseb. Paris, 1628, Book i. Hist. iv. c. xv. p. 163.

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hast deemed me worthy of this day and this hour, to receive my portion among the number of the Martyrs in the cup of Christ, to the resurrection both of soul and body in the incorruption of the Holy Ghost; among whom may I be received before Thee this day in a rich and acceptable sacrifice, even as Thou the true God, who canst not lie, foreshewing and fulfilling, hast beforehand prepared. For this and for all I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, through the eternal High-priest, Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, through whom, to Thee, with Him in the Holy Ghost, be glory both now and for future ages. Amen."

Having described his death, and the anxiety of his friends to get possession of the remains of his body, the narrative proceeds:

"Some one then suggested to Nicetes to intreat the governor not to give up his body, lest, said he, leaving the crucified One, they should begin to worship him; and this they said at the suggestion and importunity of the Jews, who also watched us when we would take the body from the fire. This they did, not knowing that we can never either leave Christ, who suffered for the salvation of all who will be saved in all the world, or worship any other. For Him, being the Son of God, we worship; but the Martyrs, as disciples and imitators of our Lord, we worthily love, because of their preeminent goodwill towards their own King and Teacher, with whom may we become partakers and fellow-disciples."

In this relic of primitive antiquity we have the prayer of a holy Martyr at his last hour, offered to God alone, through Christ alone. Here we find no allusion to any other intercessor; no commending of

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the dying Christian's soul to the Virgin. Here also we find that Christians offered religious worship to no one but the Lord; while they loved the Martyrs, and kept their names in grateful remembrance, honouring even their ashes when the spirit had fled. Polycarp pleads no other merits, he seeks no intercession, he prays for no aid, save only his Redeemer's.

SECTION IV.

We have now examined those works which are regarded by members of the Church of Rome, not less than by ourselves, as the remains of Apostolical Fathers; Christians, who, at the very lowest computation, lived close upon the Apostles' time, and who, according to the conviction of many among ancient and modern divines, had all of them conversed with the Apostles, and heard the word of truth from their mouth. The same question offers itself to us under different circumstances of great cogency. If the doctrine and practice of worshipping the Virgin as Roman Catholics now do; if the doctrine of her mediatorial office; if the practice of praying to her, even for her intercession; if reliance on her power, and influence, and merits, had been known and recognized and acted upon by the Apostles themselves, and those who were successors or disciples of the Apostles,—in the nature of things, would not some plain unequivocal indications of it have appeared in such writings as these?—writings in which much is said of prayer, of intercessory prayer, of the subjects of prayer, of the nature of prayer, of the time and place of prayer, the spirit in which to be accepted we must offer our prayer, and the persons for whom we ought to pray? Does it accord with

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common sense and ordinary experience, with what we should expect in other cases, with the analogy of history and the analogy of faith, that we should find a profound and total silence on the subject of any prayer or invocation to the Virgin Mary for her good offices and intercession, if prayer or invocation addressed to the Virgin Mary had been known, approved, and practised in the primitive Church?

This brings us past the middle of the second century.

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CHAPTER II.

EVIDENCE TO THE CLOSE OF THE SECOND CENTURY.

SECTION I. — JUSTIN MARTYR, A.D. 150.

JUSTIN, who flourished about A.D. 150, was trained from his early youth in all the learning of Greece and of Egypt. He was born in Palestine of heathen parents, but after a patient examination of the evidences of Christianity, and a close comparison of them with the systems of philosophy which had long been familiar to him, he became a disciple of Christ. In those systems he found nothing solid or satisfactory, nothing on which his mind could rest. In the Gospel he gained all that his soul yearned for, as a being destined for immortal life, conscious of that destiny, and longing for its accomplishment. His understanding was convinced, and his heart was touched; and, regardless of every worldly consideration, he openly professed Christianity, and before kings and people, Jews and Gentiles, he pleaded for the truth, and preached the religion of the crucified ONE with unquenchable zeal and astonishing effect. The evidence of such a man on any doctrine connected with our Christian faith must be looked to with interest.

Justin Martyr, in his works,* speaks of public and of private prayer; and he offers prayer, but the prayer

* Ed. Benedict. Paris, 1742.

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of which he speaks, and the prayer which he offers, are addressed to God alone; and he alludes to no advocate or intercessor in heaven, except only the eternal Son of God himself.

In his first Apologia, (or defence, addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius,) he describes minutely the manner in which converts were admitted by baptism into the fellowship of Christ's religion, and also the mode of celebrating the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; he gives, moreover, an account of the manner in which the Christians all assembled for the purpose of public worship, and how that worship was conducted. In these details many an opportunity offered itself for some mention of the Virgin Mary, had she then attained that place in Christian worship which she now possesses in the Church of Rome; but her name does not occur throughout. "In all our oblations," this is Justin's testimony, "we bless the Creator of all things, through his son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit."*

Justin Martyr refers to the Virgin Mary in her character of the mother of our Lord; but we discover no trace of any idea of her power or influence, of any invocation of her name, any thought of her merits to be pleaded in our behalf, any regard to her as a mediator and intercessor; nay, we discover no epithet expressive of honour, or dignity, or exaltation, beyond what we ourselves habitually use. "He therefore calls himself the son of man, either from his birth of a virgin who was of the race of David and Jacob and Isaac and Abraham, or because Abraham himself was the father of those persons enumerated, from whom Mary drew her origin."† And a little below, he adds, "For

* Sect. 67, p. 83.

† Trypho, sect. 100, p. 195.

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Eve being a virgin, and incorrupt, having received the word from the serpent, brought forth transgression and death; but Mary the Virgin, having received faith and joy, (on the angel Gabriel announcing to her the glad tidings that the spirit of the Lord should come upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadow her,) answered, 'Be it unto me according to thy word.' And of her was born He of whom we have shewn that so many Scriptures have been spoken; He by whom God destroys the serpent, and angels and men resembling [the serpent], but works a rescue from death for such as repent of evil and believe in him." In another place he says,* "According to the command of God, Joseph, taking him together with Mary, went into Egypt."

In the volume which contains Justin's works we find "Books of Questions," in which many doubts and difficulties and objections, as well of Jews as of Gentiles, are stated and answered. It is agreed on all sides that these are not the genuine productions of Justin, but the work of a later hand. The evidence, indeed, appears very strong which leads us to regard them as the composition of a Syrian Christian, and to assign to them the date of the fifth century; and certainly, as offering indications of the opinions of Christians at the time of their being put together, they are valuable documents.

Among these Questions an inquiry is made "How could Christ be free from blame, who so often set at nought his parents?" The answer is, He did not set his mother at nought; he honoured her in deed, and would not hurt her by his words: but the respondent adds, that Christ chiefly honoured Mary

* Trypho. sect. 102, p. 196. † Qu. 136, p. 500.

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in that view of her maternal character under which all who heard the word of God and kept it were his brothers and sisters and mother, and that she who surpassed all women in virtue was therefore chosen to be the mother of the Saviour. Justin Martyr admonishes us strongly against looking to any being for help or assistance except God only. Even when speaking of those who confide in their own strength and fortune and other sources of good, he says, in perfect unison with the pervading principles and associations of his whole mind, as far as we can read them in his works, without any modification or exception in favour of the power and influence and intercession of the Virgin, "In that Christ said, Thou art my God, go not far from me, he at the same time taught that all persons ought to hope in God who made all things, and seek for safety and health from Him alone."*

SECTION II.—TATIAN, ATHENAGORAS, THEOPHILUS.

In the same volume with the works of Justin Martyr, the Benedictine editors have published with much care the remains of Tatian, Athenagoras, and Theophilus. These were all learned Christians of the second century; and although they do not stand all on an equal footing, either with each other or with Justin, as examples of purity of doctrine and freedom from errors, yet are they all witnesses, as far as they go, of the opinions prevalent among Christians in their day: and we find their editors, the Benedictines, when strenuously endeavouring to defend by ancient testimony some doctrines of the Roman Church,

* Sect. 102, p. 197.

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appealing to the works of each of these authors separately.

Tatian, by birth an Assyrian, was a pupil of Justin Martyr: his life was, beyond others, marked by severe austerity. One work of his remains to the present time, "An Address to the Greeks;" in which he exposes the follies and immoral tendencies of their theology. In the course of his argument, mentioning many of the females by name whom the Greek poets had immortalized, he compares them with the modest and chaste and retired habits of Christian virgins, who, he says,* as they are occupied with their distaff, speak of heavenly things, and what they learn from God's oracles, far more admirably than Sappho could sing her immoral strains. The question forces itself on our mind as we read such portions of his address as these, Could a Christian writer have here abstained from speaking of the Virgin Mary, if she had been the same object of his invocation, the same source of his hope, the same theme of his praise, as she now is with worshippers in the Roman communion? Could he have passed her by unnamed, without an allusion to her honour on earth, or her exaltation to heaven, and her influence there?

Athenagoras was a Christian philosopher of considerable reputation. His Defence of our holy religion, addressed to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius and his son Commodus, was made about A.D. 177. To this we add his treatise on the Resurrection of the dead.

In his "Embassy," or "Defence,"† in language much resembling Justin Martyr's, he expresses his

* C. 33, p. 270. † C. 10, p. 286.

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wonder that any should call Christians atheists, who believed in One God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and believed also that there were Angels, created by that Supreme God to be his ministers, and to execute his commands throughout the world. He is here led (in explanation, to the royal personages, of the mystery that God could have a son,) to speak of the eternal existence of the Word with his Father; but he makes no such mention as we might have expected of the incarnation, nor does he allude to the Virgin Mary.

Theophilus addresses a learned Pagan, who had sneered at the religion of Christians. His treatise seems a sort of preliminary or introductory argument, preparing his correspondent for the admission of Christian doctrine, rather than an exposition of the truths of the Gospel. In the following passage he thus speaks of the unity of God:

"We also confess God, but only one—the builder, and maker, and creator of all this universe; and we know that all things are ordained by prescience, but by Him alone: and we have learned a holy law; but for our legislator we have the true God, who teaches us to act justly, to be pious, and do good."*

He speaks also of God the Word, begotten from everlasting of the Father.†

He speaks not at all of the Virgin Mary; but it is remarkable, that, in his translation of the third chapter of Genesis, he renders the passage to which our attention has been already drawn, not, as the Roman Vulgate translates it, with reference to the woman,

* Lib. iii. c. 9. † Lib. ii. c. 22.

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but to her seed. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it (αὐτό) shall watch * thy head, and thou shalt watch his (or its, αὐτοῦ) heel."†

SECTION III.—IRENÆUS, A. D. 180.‡

Justin sealed his faith by his blood, about A. D. 165; and next to him in the noble army of martyrs we must examine the evidence of Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons. Of his works a very small proportion survives in the original Greek; but that little is such as might well make every scholar and divine lament the calamity which theology and literature have sustained by the loss of this writer's own language. It is not, perhaps, beyond the range of hope that future researches may yet recover at least some part of the treasure. Meanwhile we must avail ourselves with thankfulness of the nervous though inelegant version which the Latin translation affords, imperfect and corrupt in many parts as that copy unfortunately is. This, however, is not the place for recommending the remains of Irenæus; and every one at all acquainted with the literature of the early Church knows well how valuable a store of ancient Christian learning is preserved even in the wreck of his works.

Bellarmin and others cite a passage from Irenæus as justifying the invocation of the Virgin Mary. The passage is itself obscure, and has been often acknowledged to be unintelligible; but, to enable the reader to judge for himself, it will be found entire in the

* τηρήσεις. There is a doubt as to the reading here. It is supposed to mean, to watch with a view of injuring.

† Lib. ii. C. 21. ‡ Ed. Paris, 1710.

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note. The sentence quoted in a mutilated form by Bellarmin, though in itself ungrammatical, sounds to this effect: "As she [Eve] was by the discourse of an angel seduced to fly from God, running counter to his word; so [she] Mary by an angelic discourse received the glad tidings that she should carry God, being obedient to his word. Although that one had disobeyed God, but this one was persuaded to obey God, in order that the Virgin Mary might become the advocate of the Virgin Eve!" * To this quotation Bellarmin adds the exclamation, "What can be clearer?"

In whatever sense Irenæus may be supposed to have employed the word here translated "advocata," it is difficult to see how the circumstance of Mary becoming the advocate of Eve, who so many generations before Mary's birth had been removed to the other world, can bear upon the question, Whether it is a Christian's duty now dwelling on earth to invoke the Virgin Mary? Some critics maintain that the word "advocata," found in the Latin version of Ire-

* "Manifeste itaque in sua propria venientem Dominum et sua propria eum bajulantem conditione quæ bajulatur ab ipso, et recapitulationem ejus quæ in ligno fuit inobedientiæ per eam quæ in ligno est obedientiam facientem et seductionem illam solutam qua seducta est male illa quæ jam viro destinata erat virgo Eva per veritatem evangelizata est bene ab angelo jam sub viro Virgo Maria. Quemadmodum enim illa per angeli sermonem seducta est ut effugeret Deum prævaricata verbum ejus, ita et hæc per angelicum sermonem evangelizata est ut portaret Deum obediens ejus verbo. Etsi ea inobedierat Deo, sed hæc suasa est obedire Deo, uti virginis Evæ virgo Maria fieret advocata. Et quemadmodum astrictum est morti genus humanum per virginem, salvatur per virginem æqua lance disposita virginalis inobedientia per virginalem obedientiam. Adhuc enim protoplasti peccatum per correptionem primogeniti emendacionem accipiens, et serpentis prudentia devicta in columbæ simplicitate, vinculis autem illis resolutis per quæ alligati eramus morti."

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næus,* is the rendering of the original word now lost, meaning "comforter or consoler."† But on this we need not dwell, because, whatever meaning be attached to that word, the passage proves nothing as to the lawfulness of worshipping the Virgin, or praying to her for her succour or for her intercession. Irenæus, in referring to the mother of our Lord, speaks of her as "Mary," or "the Virgin," "Mary, who hitherto was a virgin," &c., without any adjunct or term of reverence, never alluding to her influence with God, nor to any practice among Christians of invoking her aid.‡ He thus speaks of the incarnation: "This Son of God is our Lord, being the Word of the Father and the Son of man; since of Mary, who derived her origin from men, and was herself a human being (*quæ et ipsa erat homo*), he had his generation according to man. Wherefore, also, the Lord himself gave us a sign in the depth and the height above, which man asked not for, because he hoped not that a virgin could become pregnant who was a virgin, and bring forth a son, and that this child is God with us."§ He speaks, moreover, in a very pointed manner of the Church (excluding the invocation of angels, and incantations, &c.) "with cleanliness, purity, and openness directing prayers to the Lord who made all things, and calling upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, exercising its power for the benefit, not the seduction, of mankind."‖

* Lib. v. c. xix. p. 316.
† παράκλητος, paraclete.
‡ P. 218.
§ P. 213.
‖ Lib. ii. c. 32, sect. 5. p. 166.

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SECTION IV.—CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA,*

ABOUT A.D. 190.

Contemporary with Irenæus, and probably less than twenty years his junior, was Clement, the celebrated Christian philosopher of Alexandria. The tendency of Clement's disposition to blend with the simplicity of the Gospel that philosophy in which he so fully abounded, renders him far less valuable as a Christian teacher; but his evidence as to the matter of fact is rendered by that bent of his mind still more cogent.

Clement has left on record many of his meditations on the nature, the efficacy, the duty, and the blessed comfort of prayer. When he speaks of God, and of the Christian in prayer, (defining prayer to be "communion, or intercourse, or conversation with God,") his language rises with the subject, and becomes exquisitely beautiful, and not unfrequently sublime.

"Therefore," he says, "keeping the whole of our life as a feast, everywhere and on every part persuaded that God is present, we praise him as we till our lands; we sing hymns as we are sailing. The Christian is persuaded that God hears everything; not the voice only, but the thoughts..... He prays for things essentially good."†

"It is the extreme of ignorance to ask from those who are not gods, as though they were gods. Whence, since there is one only good God, both we ourselves and the angels supplicate from him alone, that some good things might be given to us, and others might remain with us."‡

* Edit. Oxon. 1715. † Stromata, lib. vii. § 7. p. 851, &c.

‡ Sect. 12. p. 879.

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Having referred to the opinion of some Greeks as to the power of demons over the affairs of mortals, Clement adds, "But they think it matters nothing whether we speak of these as gods, or as angels, giving to the spirits of such the name of 'demons,' and teaching that they should be worshipped by men, as having by Divine Providence, on account of the purity of their lives, received authority to be conversant about earthly places, in order that they may minister to mortals."*

In this last passage, the language which he ascribes to the supporters of heathen superstition, in order to refute their errors, so nearly approaches the language of the Church of Rome when speaking of the powers of the Virgin Mary, that we may be assured, had he entertained any idea of seeking her aid or her intercession by invocation, he would have mentioned it as an exception.

Clement speaks of Mary, and of her virgin state when she became a mother, and the mystery of Christ's birth; but he speaks of her without one word of honour.†

SECTION V.—TERTULLIAN, ABOUT A.D. 190.

Tertullian of Carthage ‡ was a contemporary of Clement of Alexandria, and so nearly of the same age, that it has been doubted which of the two should take precedence in point of time. There is a very wide difference in the tone and character of their works, as there was in the frame and constitution of their minds. The lenient and liberal views of the erudite and accomplished master of the Alexandrian school stand out in prominent and broad contrast with the strict and severe doctrines of Tertullian.

* Strom., § iii. p. 753. † P. 889. ‡ Paris, 1695.

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Tertullian fell into very serious errors by joining himself to Montanus: still, on his mind is discoverable the working of that spirit which animated the early converts to Christianity; and his whole soul seems to have been filled with a desire to promote the practical influence of the Gospel.

A decided line of distinction is drawn by Roman Catholic writers between the works of Tertullian written before he espoused the errors of Montanus, and his subsequent productions. But such a distinction will not affect his testimony as a witness on the point of fact before us. Had he maintained the invocation of the Virgin whilst he continued in full communion with the Church, and rejected it afterwards, no one would quote his later opinions as inconsistent with the general practice of Christians. But we are only seeking in his works evidence of the matter of fact.—Do they afford any proof that the worship of the Virgin, prayers to her for her aid and intercession, and praises to her honour, formed a part of the doctrine and practice of the Catholic Church in his time?

Jerome * expressly tells us that Cyprian never passed a single day without studying the works of Tertullian,† and that after Tertullian had remained a presbyter of the Church to middle life, the envy and revilings of the members of the Roman Church caused

* Jerome mentions this circumstance more than once, and his words in referring to it are very striking: "I saw one Paulus, who said that he had seen Cyprian's secretary at Rome, who used to tell him that Cyprian never passed a single day without reading Tertullian, and that he often said to him, 'Give me the master,' meaning Tertullian." Jerom. vol. iv. part ii. p. 115.

† Jerom. 1684. Tom. i. p. 183.

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him to fall from its communion, and to espouse Montanism.

Tertullian's sentiments, when his thoughts are on prayer, are very beautiful. For example, in his Apology,* with much more in the same animating strain, he says, "We (Christians) invoke the eternal God, the true God, the living God, for the safety of the Emperor. . . . Thither (heavenward) looking up with hands extended, because they are harmless; with our head bare, because we are not ashamed; without a prompter, because it is from the heart; we Christians pray for all rulers a long life, a secure government, a safe home, brave armies, a faithful senate, a good people, a quiet world.

"These things I cannot ask in prayer from any other except Him from whom I know that I shall obtain; because He is the one who alone grants, and I am one whom it behoveth to obtain by prayer,"† &c.

In the opening of his reflections on the Lord's Prayer, he says:

"Let us consider, beloved, the heavenly wisdom in the precept of praying in secret, by which He required in a man faith to believe that both the sight and the hearing of the Omnipotent God are present under our roofs and in our secret places; and desired the lowliness of faith, that to Him alone, who, according to his belief, hears and sees everywhere, he would offer his worship."‡

But the evidence of Tertullian is not confined to those passages in which he directs us to address our supplications to God alone, who alone heareth prayer: his sentiments with regard to the Virgin Mary (like those of Chrysostom and others) are altogether conclu-

* Sect. 30. † P. 27. ‡ P. 129.

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sive on the question before us. It is inconceivable that any man accustomed to offer praises to the Virgin, as the Roman Church now does, to confide in her intercession, and to invoke her name in prayer, could have entertained such sentiments as are expressed in the following passage, — sentiments which Tertullian repeats in other places, with only some slight variety of expression. "But what reason is there for the answer, which denied his mother and his brethren? The brothers of the Lord had not believed in him, as it is contained in the Gospel, which was before Marcion's time. His mother, in like manner, is not shewn to have adhered to him; whereas other Marys and Marthas were often in his company. By this, finally, their unbelief is made evident. Whilst he was teaching the way of life, whilst he was preaching the kingdom of God, whilst he was engaged in curing sicknesses and evils, at a time when strangers were fixedly intent upon him, then persons so nearly related to him were absent. At last they come up and stand outside the door, and do not enter; not thinking, forsooth, of what was going on there: nor do they wait, just as though they were bringing something more urgent than the business in which he was then chiefly engaged; but, moreover, they interrupt him, and endeavour to recal him from so great a work.

"Now I pray you, Apelles, and you, Marcion, if perchance, when you were playing at chess, or disputing about players or charioteers, you were called away by such a message, would you not have said, 'Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?' And whilst Christ was preaching and setting forth God, fulfilling the law and the prophets, dispersing the darkness of so many ages, did he undeservedly employ this

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saying to strike at the unbelief of those who stood without, or to shake off the importunity of those who were calling him away from his work?"*

In another place† he says on the same subject, "Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. He, Christ, with reason felt indignant, that, whilst strangers were bent intently on his discourse, persons so nearly related to him should stand without, seeking, moreover, to call him away from his solemn work."‡

In another treatise§ he tells us that Christ was brought forth by a virgin, who was also to be married once after his birth, that in Christ the two titles of sanctity might be distinctly marked, by a mother who was both a virgin and also once married.

This brings us to the end of the second century.

* De carne Christi, vii. p. 315.

† Adv. Marcionem, iv. 19, p. 433.

‡ Chrysostom (as we shall see when we examine his testimony) employs even stronger language than Tertullian, in reflecting upon the conduct of Mary and the Lord's brothers on this occasion.

§ De Monogamia, vii. p. 529.

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CHAPTER III.

EVIDENCE THROUGH THE THIRD CENTURY.

SECTION I.—EVIDENCE OF ORIGEN, A. D. 230.

JEROME informs us that Tertullian lived to a very advanced age. Long, therefore, before his death flourished Origen, one of the most celebrated lights of the primitive Church.* He was educated a Christian. Indeed, his father is said to have suffered martyrdom about A. D. 202. Origen was a pupil of Clement of Alexandria. His virtues and his labours have called forth the admiration of all ages; and, though he cannot be implicitly followed as a teacher, what still remains of his works will be delivered down as a rich treasure to succeeding times.

He was a most voluminous writer; and Jerome asked the members of his Church,† "Who is there among us that can read as many books as Origen has composed?" A large proportion of his works are lost, and of those which remain few are preserved in the original Greek. We must often study Origen through the medium of a translation, the accuracy of which we

* Benedictine edition by De la Rue, Paris, 1733. De la Rue had completed only part of his preface to the third volume when he died. This was in 1739. He seems to have been as pious and benevolent as he was learned and industrious.

† Vol. iv. epist. xli. p. 346.

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have no means of verifying. Many of the works formerly ascribed to him are unquestionably spurious; and yet are they quoted by Roman Catholic authors and editors of the present day in defence of the worship of saints and angels.* Speaking of one of them still unhappily cited as genuine, we can only repeat the very words which Huet, Bishop of Avranches, so many years ago uttered with regard to that very work: "It is wonderful, that they should be sometimes cited in evidence by some theologians, WITHOUT ANY NOTE OF THEIR BEING FORGERIES."†

It seems impossible to find words which can express more strongly than the words of Origen express the duty and privilege of Christians praying to God alone for all they need, and offering that prayer through the alone mediation of Jesus Christ, the Word and Son of God, our Saviour, to the utter exclusion of all creatures of whatever nature as objects of our prayer, or as intercessors TO BE INVOKED.

Celsus accused the Christians of being atheists, godless men, without a God; and, too well representing the weakness and failings of human nature, urged on them the necessity, at least the expediency, of conciliating those intermediate beings who, as he said, executed the will of the Supreme Being, and might perhaps have much left at their own will and discretion to give or to withhold; and, consequently, the desirableness of

* Dr. Wiseman in his Lectures in Moorfields, and Berrington and Kirk in their joint compilation (from which Dr. Wiseman quoted), cite the "Lament of Origen" as Origen's own work. Pope Gelasius and a Council of seventy assistant Bishops, in the year 494, denounced it as apocryphal.—Berrington and Kirk, London, 1830, p. 403; Lectures by Nicholas Wiseman, D.D. London, 1836, vol. ii. p. 107; Conc. Labb. vol. iv. p. 1265.

† Origen's Works, vol. iv. p. 326. Appendix.

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securing their good offices by praying to them. To these charges and suggestions Origen replies:

"We must pray to God alone, who is over all things; and we must pray also to the only-begotten and first-born of every creature, the Word of God; and we must implore Him as our High-priest to carry our prayer, first coming to Him, to his God and our God, to his Father and the Father of those who live agreeably to the word of God."*

With very much to the same effect, and many most sublime passages urging the same doctrine, but which we have not room here to quote at large, we read the following:

"The one God—the God who is over all—is to be propitiated by us, and to be appeased by prayer; the God who is rendered favourable by piety and all virtue. But if he (Celsus) is desirous, after the Supreme God, to propitiate some others also, let him bear in mind, that just as a body in motion is accompanied by the motion of its shadow, so also, by rendering the Supreme God favourable, it follows that the person has all His friends, angels, souls, spirits, favourable also, for they sympathize with those who are worthy of God's favour; and not only do they become kindly affected towards the worthy, but they also join in their work with those who desire to worship the Supreme God; and they propitiate him, and pray with us, and supplicate with us. We therefore boldly say, that, together with men who on principle prefer the better part and pray to God, ten thousands of holy powers join in prayer (ἄκλητοι) UNASKED" [UNBIDDEN, UNCALLED UPON, UNINVOKED].†

* Cont. Cels. § 8. c. xxvi. vol. i. p. 761.

† Cont. Cels. lib. viii. § 64. vol. i. p. 789. See also lib. viii. vol. i. p. 786; lib. v. § 4. p. 579; lib. viii. § 17. p. 751.

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What an opportunity was here for Origen to have stated, that though Christians did not call upon angels and the subordinate divinities of heathenism, yet that with other holy persons, objects of their prayers in heaven, they called upon the Virgin Mary, the mother of the Saviour, the queen of heaven, the gate of heaven, the way to heaven, in whom the Supreme God was well pleased, and who could succour and save whom she would! Instead of this, we find him in one place referring to Mary * just as we should ourselves speak of her, as one not like other mothers, but as a pure Virgin, and therefore not amenable to the Levitical law relating to matrons:† in another, he refers to "the announcement to Zacharias of the birth of John, and to Mary of the advent of our Saviour among men;"‡ making no difference of dignity between the father of the Baptist and the mother of our Lord. But not one word is found to intimate the belief of himself or of the Church in the influence and advocacy of Mary, or the practice of the Church or of himself in praying to her for her succour or intercession.

But the positive testimony of Origen is very strong against the present doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome towards the Virgin Mary. Huet charges Origen with holding unsound tenets, "contrary to the doctrine at the present day of the Church of Rome, and to the Council of Trent." The third error with which he charges him is, that whereas "the Church and that Council maintain that the Virgin Mary never had sin, Origen holds that she was not only liable to sin, but actually was guilty of it." §

* In Levit. Hom. viii. vol. ii. p. 228.

† Levit. xii. 2.

‡ Comment. on John, § 24. vol. iv. p. 82.

§ Vol. iv. p. 156, in Appendix.

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And in proof of this charge Huet quotes Origen's comment on Luke, c. ii.—"What is that sword that pierced through the hearts, not only of others, but of Mary also? It is plainly written that, at the time of the passion, all the Apostles were offended; the Lord himself saying, 'All you shall be offended this night.' Therefore all were offended to such a degree, that Peter also, the chief of the Apostles, thrice denied him. What! Do we suppose, that when the Apostles were offended, the mother of our Lord was free from feeling offence? If she did not feel offence in the suffering of our Lord, Jesus did not die for her sins. But if all have sinned and want the glory of God, being justified by his grace and redeemed, surely Mary too was offended at that time. And this is what Simeon now prophesies, saying, And through thy own soul, thou who knowest that without a husband thou broughtest forth, who didst hear the voice of Gabriel, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee,' the sword of unbelief shall pierce; and thou shalt be struck by the sharp point of doubt, when thou shalt see him whom thou heardest to be the Son of God, and whom thou knowest that thou broughtest forth without a husband, crucified and dying, and subject to human suffering."* Huet implicates, and not without reason, in the same charge Basil, Chrysostom, Cyril, and others. The fact is, that a large proportion of the ancient Fathers of the Church speak freely on the want of faith, or its imperfection and weakness, in the Virgin Mary.

* Homil. in Luc. xvii., vol. iii. p. 952.

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SECTION II.—GREGORY THAUMATURGUS, A.D. 245.

Gregory, whose original name was Theodorus, and who was also called Thaumaturgus, or the Wonder-worker, from the number of miracles ascribed to him, was Bishop of Cæsarea in Pontus.* His name is not found among those whom the canon law of Rome, or the council of Pope Gelasius, has admitted into the catalogue of approved and authoritative teachers; indeed, that decree makes no mention of him. Yet, since he is often quoted by Bellarmin and other Roman Catholic controversialists, it does not appear safe to omit all inquiry into his evidence.

This Gregory was a disciple of Origen, on whom he wrote a panegyric, which Jerome reports to have been extant in his time; he also wrote a work on the Book of Ecclesiastes, mentioned likewise by Jerome, which has come down to the present day. In these works,† which are held by all to be genuine, not the slightest trace can be found of any supplication to the Virgin, or any reference to her intercession, or any praises to her name.

To these genuine works Vossius added three or four others, which either had never before been brought to light, or had never been published as Gregory's, though

* He is said to have been advanced to the episcopate in the tenth year of Alexander Severus, i.e. A.D. 245. Among other wonderful acts this "Wonder-worker" is said by his prayer to have removed a mountain which prevented the building of a church; to have dried up a lake which had caused some discord; and by planting his staff on the bank of the river Lycus (the staff immediately growing into a tree) he prevented that river from ever after inundating the land, or extending its flood beyond that tree. In the prefatory matter of the edition of Vossius, a reference for these miracles is made to the Roman Breviary on Nov. 17.

† Paris, 1622.

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one had been previously published as a work of Athanasius. Among these are one sermon on the Baptism of our Lord, and a dissertation on the Soul, together with three discourses delivered in honour of the Virgin on the festival of the Annunciation; though the origin of that festival cannot be referred with any show of reason to an earlier date than the seventh century,—more than three centuries after Gregory's death.*

SECTION III.—EVIDENCE OF ST. CYPRIAN,† A.D. 258.

In the middle of the third century, Cyprian,‡ a man of substance and a rhetorician of Carthage, was converted to Christianity. He was then fifty years of age; and his learning, virtues, and devotedness to the cause which he had espoused, soon raised him to the dignity, the responsibility, and in those days the danger of the episcopate. Many of his writings of undoubted genuineness are preserved, and they have in every age been appealed to as the works of a faithful son of the Catholic Church. On the subject of prayer he has written powerfully and affectingly; and had he addressed himself to the Virgin Mary, invoking her succour or urging her intercession, his line of argument, in many parts of his various productions, would have led naturally to an expression of his sentiments in that respect: but no trace of such belief or practice

* These are beyond question suppositious. Some of the arguments by which their spuriousness is proved will be found in the Appendix.

† Benedictine, Paris, 1726.

‡ Cyprian is said to have been converted about A.D. 246, to have been consecrated A.D. 248, and to have suffered martyrdom, A.D. 258. See Jerome, vol. iv. p. 342.

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is to be found. We need not be detained long by our inquiry into the evidence of Cyprian. Two extracts indicative of the tone and character of his views will suffice: one forming a part of the introduction to his Comments on the Lord's Prayer, fitted for the edification of Christians in every age; the other closing his treatise on Mortality, or The Mortality, one of those beautiful productions by which during the plague that raged in Carthage, A.D. 252, he comforted and exhorted the Christians, that they might meet death without fear or amazement, in sure and certain hope of eternal life in heaven. The sentiments in the latter passage will be responded to by every Christian, whether in communion with the Church of Rome or with the Church of England; whilst in the former we are reminded, that, to pray as Cyprian prayed, we must address ourselves to God alone, in the name, and trusting to the merits only, of his blessed Son.

"He who caused us to live taught us also to pray, from that kindness evidently by which he designs to give and confer on us every other blessing; that, when we speak to the Father in the prayer and supplication which his Son taught, we may the more readily be heard. He had previously foretold that the hour was coming when the true worshippers should worship the Father in spirit and in truth; and he fulfilled what he before promised, that we who have received the spirit and truth from his sanctification, may from his instruction offer adoration truly and spiritually. For what prayer can be more spiritual than that which is given to us by Christ, by whom even the Holy Spirit is sent to us? What can be a more true prayer with the Father, than that which came from the lips of the Son, who is Truth? So that to pray otherwise than he

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taught is not only ignorance, but a fault, since he has himself laid it down and said, 'Ye reject the commandment of God to establish your own traditions.' Let us pray then, most beloved brethren, as our teacher God has instructed us. It is a welcome and friendly prayer to petition God from his own, to mount up to his ears by the prayer of Christ. Let the Father recognize the words of his Son. When we offer a prayer, let Him who dwelleth inwardly in our breast, Himself be in our voice; and since we have Him as our advocate with the Father for our sins, when as sinners we are petitioning for our sins, let us put forth the words of our advocate."*

"We must consider, most beloved brethren, and frequently reflect, that we have renounced the world, and are meanwhile living here as strangers and pilgrims. Let us embrace the day which assigns each to his own home, . . . which restores us to paradise and the kingdom of heaven, snatched hence, and liberated from the entanglements of the world. What man, when he is in a foreign country, would not hasten to return to his native land? . . . We regard paradise as our country. . . . We have begun already to have the patriarchs for our parents. Why do we not hasten and run, that we may see our country and salute our parents? There a large number of dear ones are waiting for us, of parents, brothers, children; a numerous and full crowd are longing for us, already secure of their own immortality, and still anxious for our safety. To come to the sight and the embrace of these, how great will be the mutual joy to them and to us! What a pleasure of the kingdom of heaven is there without the fear of dying, and with an eternity

* De Orat. Dom. p. 204.

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of living! How consummate and never-ending a happiness! There is the glorious company of the Apostles; there is the assembly of exulting Prophets; there is the unnumbered family of Martyrs, crowned for the victory of their struggles and sufferings; there are virgins triumphing, who by the power of chastity have subdued the lusts of the flesh and the body; there are the merciful recompensed, who with food and bounty to the poor have done the works of righteousness, who keeping the Lord's commands have transferred their earthly inheritance into heavenly treasures. To these, O most dearly beloved brethren, let us hasten with most eager longing: let us desire that our lot may be, to be with them speedily, to come speedily to Christ. Let God see this to be our thought; let our Lord Christ behold this to be the purpose of our mind and faith, who will give more abundant rewards of his glory to them whose desires for himself have been the greater."*

In Cyprian we do not find one word expressive of honour or reverence towards the Virgin Mary; no allusion to her advocacy and intercession, or her influence with God. Nor is her name mentioned in the letter of his correspondent, Firmilian, Bishop of Cappadocia.

Some notice must here be taken of Methodius, Bishop of Tyre, a pious writer of the third century. A work, formerly attributed to him,† continues even at

* De Mortalitate, p. 236.

† Dr. Wiseman, in his Remarks on Mr. Palmer's Letter, 1841, p. 30, quotes from this homily of Methodius as though it were genuine. —Methodius, Gl. Combes. Paris, 1644. See the note of the Benedictine

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the present day to be quoted in proof of the early invocation of the Virgin; but the homily has long ago been pronounced by the best critics, some of them Roman Catholic editors, to be the production of a later age. Indeed, many homilies ascribed to other authors, purporting to have been delivered, like this, at so early a period, on the festival of our Lord's Presentation in the temple, carry in their very forehead the stamp of spuriousness; because that feast began to be observed in the Church so late as the fifteenth year of Justinian, in the sixth century. The theological language of this homily, moreover, belongs to a period long subsequent; for the writer employs expressions to guard against the Arian heresy, and seems to make extracts from the Nicene Creed — "very God of very God, very light of very light." The general opinion seems to be, that both this and many other writings formerly ascribed to the first Methodius, were written by persons of a later age. Even were the work genuine, instead of being confessedly spurious, it is clearly oratorical, and affords just as strong a demonstration that Methodius believed that the city of Jerusalem could hear his salutation, as that the Virgin could hear his prayers; for he

editor of Jerome, who says, once for all, that the Symposium is the only entire work of Methodius extant.—Jerome's Works, vol. ii. p. 910. Baronius says expressly, "I do not hesitate to say, that no Greek or Latin writer has left a sermon delivered on the feast of the Purification (called sometimes 'Hypapantes,' sometimes 'Simeon and Anna,') before the fifteenth year of Justinian; and that Pope Gelasius paved the way for the institution of that feast, by putting an end to the festivities of the Lupercalia, which were also observed in February." — Baronius, in Feb. 2, Paris, 1607, p. 57. Lumper also, Part 13, p. 474, shews that unquestionably this homily is of a much later age.

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addresses the same "Hail" to Mary, Simeon, and the Holy City alike, calling it "The earthly heaven."*

SECTION IV.—LACTANTIUS, A.D. 280—317.

Cyprian suffered martyrdom somewhat before the year 260. Towards the close of this century, and at the beginning of the fourth, flourished Lactantius.† He was deeply imbued with classical learning and philosophy. Before he became a writer, (as Jerome informs us,‡) he taught rhetoric at Nicomedia; and afterwards in extreme old age he was the tutor of Cæsar Crispus, son of Constantine, in Gaul. Among many other writings which Jerome enumerates, he specifies the book, "On the Anger of God," as a most beautiful work. Bellarmin speaks of him disparagingly, as one who had fallen into many errors, and was better versed in Cicero than in the Holy Scriptures. The fact is, that his testimony is decidedly against the doctrine of the adoration of any other being than God, and of the intercession of any other mediator than Christ.

The following are among the few passages in his works that bear on our subject: "He was, therefore, both God and man; appointed a mediator between God and man. Whence the Greeks call him Μεσίτην [mediator], that he might bring man to God, that is, to immortality; because, had he been only God, he could not have given a pattern to man; if he had been only man, he could not have forced man to justice, had not an authority and power

* See Fabricius, vol. vii. p. 268, and vol. x. p. 241.

† Ed. Lenglet Dufresnoy, 1748.

‡ Jerome, vol. iv. p. ii. p. 110; Paris, 1706.

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greater than man's been added."* "God," he says, in one passage, "hath created ministers, whom we call messengers [angels].... But neither are these gods, nor do they wish to be called gods, or to be worshipped, as being those who do nothing beyond the command and will of God."†

Lactantius speaks‡ of a "Holy Virgin," chosen for the work of Christ; but not one word of greater honour, or looking towards adoration; though dwelling on the incarnation of the Son of God, had he or his fellow-believers paid religious honour to Mary, it is incredible that he would have avoided all allusion to her advocacy and power.

And this brings us to the close of the third century.

* Vol. i. p. 339 † Vol. i. p. 31. ‡ Vol. i. p. 299.

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CHAPTER IV.

EVIDENCE OF THE FOURTH CENTURY, DOWN TO THE COUNCIL OF NICÆA.

SECTION I.—EUSEBIUS, A.D. 314.*

THE evidence of Eusebius on any subject connected with primitive faith and practice cannot be looked to without feelings of deep interest. He flourished at the beginning of the fourth century, and was Bishop of Cæsarea, in Palestine. His testimony has always been appealed to, as an authority not likely to be gainsaid. He was a voluminous writer, and his writings were very diversified in their character. But in his works, historical, biographical, controversial, or by whatever name any of them may be called, overflowing as they are with learning, philosophical and scriptural, we find no single passage to countenance the decrees of the Council of Trent; not one passage is found among his writings to justify the belief that the primitive Church was wont to supplicate the Virgin Mary, either to impart to the supplicants any favour, or to pray for them. The testimony of Eusebius has a directly contrary bearing.

In the opening chapter of his Ecclesiastical History, Eusebius prays, "that he might have God for his guide in the way, the power of the Lord to work with

* His chief theological works were certainly written before the Nicene Council, and probably A.D. 315.

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him." And again, (c. v.) "Calling upon God the Father of the Word, and the heavenly Word himself, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, to be our guide and helper in the declaration of the truth." Proceeding to the history of our Lord, and having dwelt much upon his pre-existence and Godhead, he says not one word about the mother who bare Him, beyond this, that, in giving the genealogy of Joseph, the Gospel virtually gives the genealogy of Mary.

Eusebius again and again reminds us, that, though there be spiritual powers keeping their stations around their King, whom we should know and honour according to their measure of dignity, we must "render to God alone, the Sovereign King, the honour of worship," * "confessing God alone, and Him alone worshipping."†

Eusebius‡ speaks of the Virgin Mary, but is altogether silent as to any religious honour of any kind being offered to her; and that in passages where he could not have omitted all reference to it, had it at all existed. In the oration of the Emperor Constantine, as it is recorded by Eusebius,§ direct mention is made of "the chaste Virginity," and of "the maid who was the mother of God, and yet remained a Virgin." But the object present to the author's mind was so exclusively God manifest in the flesh, that he does not throughout even mention the name of Mary, or allude to any religious honour due or paid to her.

* Demonst. Evang.; Paris, 1628, Lib. iii. c. 3, p. 106.

† Præpar. Evan. Lib. vii. c. 15, p. 237.

‡ Cantab. 1720: § 11, p. 689; and § 19, p. 703.

§ Augustæ Taurinorum, (Triers,) 1746; vol. i. p. 624.

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SECTION II.

APOSTOLICAL CANONS AND CONSTITUTIONS.*

These works, though confessedly not the genuine productions of the Apostles or of their age, have been always held in much veneration by the Church of Rome. The most learned writers fix their date at a period not more remote than the beginning of the fourth century. In these are given minute rules for the conducting of public worship; forms of prayer are prescribed to be used in the Church by the bishops and clergy, and by the people; forms of supplication and thanksgiving are recommended for private use, in the morning, at night, and at meals; forms, too, there are of creeds and confessions; but not one single allusion in them is found to any religious address to the Virgin Mary, or any reference to her power, influence, merits, or intercession. Occasions most opportune for the introduction of such doctrine and practice are repeatedly recurring, but they are uniformly passed by. Again and again is prayer directed to be made to the one only living and true God exclusively of all other, and exclusively through the mediation and intercession of the one only Saviour, Jesus Christ. The Apostolical Constitutions, in which there is reference made to the mother of our Lord, can scarcely be read by any one without leaving an impression clear and powerful on the mind, that no religious honour was paid to the Virgin Mary when they were written, certainly not more than is now cheerfully paid to her by members of the Church of England. If, for example, we take

* In the same volumes with the Apostolical Fathers above referred to.

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the prayer prescribed to be used on the appointment of a Deaconess, the inference from it must be, that others, with whom the Lord's Spirit had dwelt, were at least held in equal honour with Mary. "O Eternal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of male and female, who didst fill with thy Spirit Miriam and Hannah and Huldah, and didst not disdain that thy Son should be born of a woman," &c.* Thus, in another passage Mary is spoken of just as other women who had the gift of prophecy; and of her equally and in conjunction with the others it is said, that they were not elated by the gift, not lifting themselves up against the men. "But even have women prophesied in ancient times,—Miriam, the sister of Aaron and Moses; after her, Deborah; and afterwards Huldah and Judith, one under Josiah, the other under Darius; and the mother of the Lord also prophesied, and Elizabeth her kinswoman, and Anna, and in our days the daughters of Philip; yet they were not lifted up against the men, but observed their own measure. Therefore, among you should any man or woman have such a grace, let them be humble, that God may take pleasure in them."†

In the Apostolical Canons we find no allusion to Mary, nor indeed any passage bearing on our present inquiry, except the last clause of all, containing the benediction. Here not only is the prayer for spiritual blessings addressed to God alone, but it is offered exclusively through the mediation of Christ alone

"Now may God, the only unproduced Being, the Creator of all things, unite you all by peace in the Holy Ghost, make you perfect unto every good work, not to be turned aside, unblameable, not deserving re-

* Book viii. c. 20. † Book viii. c. 2.

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proof; and may He deem you worthy of eternal life with us, by the mediation of his beloved Son Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour, with whom be glory to Him the Sovereign God and Father in the Holy Ghost the Comforter, now and ever, world without end. Amen." Here is no prayer to Mary, no reference to her merits and intercession, no ascription of glory to her and the Saviour conjointly. God in Christ is all in all.

SECTION III.—SAINT ATHANASIUS, A.D. 350.*

ATHANASIUS, the renowned and undaunted defender of the Catholic faith, was born about the year 296; and, after presiding in the Church as bishop for more than forty-six years, died about A.D. 373, approaching his 80th year. It is impossible for any one interested in the question, "What is truth?" to look upon the belief and practice of this primitive Christian champion with indifference. On the subject of our present investigation, few among the early writers of the Church have been so grossly and recklessly misrepresented in his belief and in his practice as Athanasius. Bellarmin and others cite him as a witness in favour of the invocation of the Virgin, whereas a careful and upright study of his remains brings before us a man who had taken most true and scriptural views of the Christian's hope and confidence in God alone; the glowing fervour of his piety centring only in the Lord, — his sure and certain hope in life and in death anchoring only in the mercies of God, through the merits and mediation of

* Benedict. ed. Paris, 1698. Padua, 1777.—In this edition some fragments ascribed to Athanasius, and found in certain catenæ, &c., have been introduced, some of which are of a doubtful character, and others evidently spurious.

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Jesus Christ alone, our only Mediator, Advocate, and Saviour.

It is a painful subject; and, were the truth not at stake, we might gladly have drawn a veil over it, and hidden it from the eyes of others and our own. Anxious as we may be to avoid whatever might savour of personal charges, the truth as it is in Jesus imperatively calls upon us to lay open before the world the expedients by which the worship of the Virgin Mary is attempted to be defended in our own country, in our own times, and by persons whose authority seems to have assumed the highest place among our Roman Catholic brethren.

A homily formerly ascribed to St. Athanasius, but which has been long rejected as spurious and apocryphal, continues to be quoted now at the present day as genuine. Bellarmin so appeals to it; and had he been the only writer, or the last writer, who had cited this homily as the testimony of St. Athanasius, it would have been enough for us to refer to the judgment of the Benedictine editors who have since Bellarmin's time classed this homily among the spurious works* which had been without reason assigned to Athanasius. Or rather, we might have referred the whole matter to Bellarmin himself. For it is very remarkable, that though, in his anxiety to enlist every able writer to defend the cause of the invocation of saints, he has cited this homily in his Church Triumphant as containing the words of Athanasius, without any allusion to its decided spuriousness, or even to any doubt or suspicion attached to it, and although he again appeals to it† precisely in the same manner,

* Vol. ii. pp. 390. 401.

† Vol. ii. p. 515. De Cult. Sanct. lib. iii. c. xvi. Prague, 1721.

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and without any qualification whatever, in proof of the antiquity of the feast of the Annunciation, on which this homily was said to have been delivered by Athanasius; yet, when pronouncing his judgment on the different works assigned to Athanasius, he condemns this same treatise as a forgery, declaring the evidence against it to be irresistible.* Dr. Nicholas Wiseman, Bishop of Melopotamus, thus introduces and comments upon the passage, or rather the extracts drawn from the homily in question:

"St. Athanasius, the most zealous and strenuous supporter that the Church ever possessed of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and consequently of his infinite superiority over all the saints, thus enthusiastically addresses his ever-blessed mother: 'Hear now, O daughter of David; incline thine ear to our prayers; we raise our cry to thee. Remember us, O most holy Virgin, and, for the feeble eulogiums we give thee, grant us great gifts from the treasures of thy graces, thou that art full of grace. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Queen and Mother of God intercede for us.' "Mark well," continues Dr. Wiseman, "these words, 'grant us great gifts from the treasures of thy graces,' as if he hoped directly to receive them from her. Do Catholics use stronger words than these; or did Athanasius think or speak with us, or with Protestants?" † [Dr. Wiseman's note refers us to "Serm. in Annunt. t. ii. p. 401."]

To these questions the direct answer is, that neither these words, nor the homily from which they are

* Bellarmin, De Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis. Cologne, 1617, vol. vii. p. 50.

† Dr. Wiseman's Lectures, vol. ii. p. 108. London, Booker, 1836. Berington and Kirk, pp. 430, 431.

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quoted, ever came from the pen of Athanasius; and moreover, that the irrefutable proof of their spuriousness is drawn out at large by the Benedictine editors in the very edition and the identical volume of the works of Athanasius to which Dr. Wiseman refers for his authority when he quotes the passage as genuine.

The above quotation (made up of different sentences selected from different clauses, and put together so as to make one paragraph,) is found in a homily called "On the Annunciation of the Mother of God." How long before the time of Baronius this homily had been discarded as spurious, or how long its genuineness had been suspected, does not appear; but certainly two centuries and a half ago, and repeatedly since, it has been condemned as totally and indisputably spurious, and has been excluded from the works of Athanasius as a forgery, not by members only of the Reformed Church, but by most zealous and steady adherents to the Church of Rome, and the most strenuous defenders of her doctrines and practice.

The Benedictine editors who published the remains of St. Athanasius in 1698, class the works contained in the second volume under two heads, the doubtful and the spurious; and the homily in question is ranked, without hesitation, among the spurious. In the middle of that volume, they not only declare the work to be unquestionably a forgery, assigning the reasons for their decision, but they fortify their own judgment by quoting at length the letter written by the celebrated Baronius, more than a century before, to our countryman Stapleton. Both these documents are very interesting, and compel us at every turn to

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renew our astonishment that such a homily should be so quoted in the present day without any allusion to its spurious or doubtful character.

The Benedictine editors begin their preface thus:* "That this discourse is spurious, THERE IS NO LEARNED MAN WHO DOES NOT NOW ADJUDGE. The style proves itself, more clear than the sun, to be different from that of Athanasius. Besides this, very many trifles shew themselves here unworthy of any sensible man whatever, not to say of Athanasius; and a great number of expressions unknown to Athanasius, so that it savours of lower Greek. And truly his subtle disputation of the hypostasis of Christ, and on the two natures in Christ, persuades us that the writer lived after the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon; of which councils moreover he uses the identical words: whereas his dissertation on the two wills in Christ seems to argue that he lived after the spreading of the error of the Monothelites. But" (continue these editors) "we would add here the dissertation of Baronius on the subject, sent to us by our brethren from Rome. That illustrious annotator, indeed, having read only the Latin version of Nannius, which is clearer than the Greek, did not observe the astonishing perplexity of the style."

The dissertation which the Benedictine editors append was contained in a letter written by Baronius to Stapleton in consequence of some animadversions which Stapleton had communicated to Cardinal Allen on the judgment of Baronius. The letter is dated Rome, Nov. 1592. The judgment of Baronius on the

* This preface will be found at p. 332, vol. ii. of the Paduan edition of 1777, where the homily is ranked without any doubt among the spurious works.

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spuriousness of this homily had been published to the world some time previously; for, after preliminary words of kindness and respect to his correspondent, Baronius proceeds to say, that, when on the former occasion he published his sentiments on this homily, it was only cursorily and by the way, his work then being on another subject. Nevertheless, he conceived that the little he had then stated would be sufficient to shew that the homily was not the production of Athanasius, and that all persons of learning WHO WERE DESIROUS OF THE TRUTH would freely agree with him; nor was he in this expectation disappointed, for very many expressed their agreement with him, congratulating him on separating legitimate from spurious children. In addition to the arguments adopted from him by the Benedictines, Baronius urges this fact, that though Cyril had the works of Athanasius in his custody, and though both the disputing parties ransacked every place for sentiments of Athanasius countenancing their tenets, yet neither at Ephesus nor at Chalcedon was this homily quoted, though it must have driven Eutyches and Nestorius from the field, so exact are its definitions and statements on the points then at issue. Baronius adds, that, so far from reversing the judgment which he had before passed against the genuineness of this homily, he was compelled in justice to declare his conviction that it could not have been written till after the heresy of the Monothelites had been spread abroad. This would fix its date, at the very earliest, subsequently to the commencement of the SEVENTH century, three hundred years after Athanasius attended the Council of Nicæa. Among the last words of Baronius we read this sentiment, which can never be neglected without injury to the

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cause of truth, and which, if uniformly applied in our religious discussions, would soon bring controversy within far narrower limits, and gradually convert it from angry warfare into a friendly interchange of opinions: "Nor do I consider these sentiments concerning Athanasius to be affirmed with any detriment to the Church; for the Church suffers no loss on this account, who, being the pillar and ground of the truth, shrinks very far from seeking, like Æsop's jackdaw, helps and ornaments which are not her own: the bare truth shines more beautiful in her own naked simplicity."

And yet, after this utter repudiation of the whole homily, as a work falsely attributed to Athanasius; after its unqualified condemnation by Bellarmin; after the Benedictine editors have declared, that "there was no learned man who did not adjudge it to be spurious, the forgery being self-condemned by evidence clearer than the sun; after Baronius has expressed his assurance that ALL LEARNED MEN DESIROUS OF THE TRUTH would agree with him in pronouncing it to be spurious;—after all this, we find it quoted in evidence as the genuine work of Athanasius in the middle of the nineteenth century, without the faintest shadow of an allusion to the combined judgment by which it has been condemned, or even to any suspicion ever having been entertained of its being a forgery.

The genuine works of Athanasius himself prove him to have thought and spoken with the Church of England, and not with the Church of Rome, on the invocation of the Virgin Mary. Whilst he speaks of God having taken our nature upon him, Athanasius again and again calls Mary "the holy Virgin who bare

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God."* But not one single sentence has been found indicating either his acknowledgment of her as a mediator and intercessor, or his practice of invoking her succour and her prayers. But many passages might be cited which prove him to have looked to God alone, through Christ alone, for the supply of all his temporal and spiritual wants. We have been detained so long on the spurious homily assigned to him, that we cannot make room (as we should have wished) for his entire comment on St. Paul's expressions, 1 Thess. chap. iii. v. 11, when, in his third oration against the Arians, he would prove from it the unity of the Father and the Son. The argument at large will amply repay a careful examination; its opening sentences are these:

"Thus then again, when he is praying for the Thessalonians, and saying, 'Now our God and Father himself, and the Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you,' he preserves the unity of the Father and the Son; for he says not, 'May THEY direct,' as though a two-fold grace were given from Him AND Him, but, 'May HE direct,' to shew that the Father giveth this through the Son. For if there was not an unity, and the Word was not the proper offspring of the Father's substance, as the radiation of the light, but the Son was distinct in nature from the Father, it had sufficed for the Father alone to have made the gift, no generated being partaking with the Maker in the gifts. But now such a giving proves the unity of the Father and the Son. Thus, no one would pray to receive any thing from God AND the angels, or FROM ANY OTHER CREATED BEING; nor would any one say, 'May God AND the angels give it thee;' but from the Father and the Son,

* See the close of his work on the Incarnation.

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because of their unity, and the oneness of the gifts. For whatsoever is given, is given through the Son; nor is there anything which the Father works, except through the Son; for thus the receiver has the gracious favour without fail."

In what broad contrast does this doctrine of Athanasius stand with a prayer said to be approved by Pius VI., and defended by Dr. Wiseman in his Remarks on a Letter from the Rev. W. Palmer; London, 1841, p. 36: "Jesus, Joseph, and Mary, I offer you my heart and my soul. Jesus, Joseph, and Mary, assist me in my last agony. Jesus, Joseph, and Mary, may my soul expire in peace with you." These things are now, but from the beginning it was not so.

Athanasius was ever bent on establishing the perfect divinity and humanity of Christ, and he thus speaks: "The general scope of Holy Scripture is to make a general announcement concerning the Saviour, that he was always God, and is a Son, being the Word, and brightness, and wisdom of the Father; and that He afterwards became man for us, taking flesh of the Virgin Mary, WHO BARE GOD."*

* Τῆς Θεοτόκου. Those who would depend upon this word *theotocos* as a proof of the exalted honour in which the early Christians held the Virgin, and not rather of their anxiety to preserve whole and entire the doctrine of the union of perfect God and perfect man in the person of Christ deriving his manhood through her, would do well to weigh the language of the Fathers in some analogous cases. The Apostle James (for example), called in Scripture the Lord's brother, was afterwards named Adelphotheos, or God's brother; not to exalt him above his fellow Apostles, but to declare the faith of those who gave him that name, that the Lord Jesus was very God. Just so the word theotocos —or "she who gave birth to God"—was applied to Mary, not to exalt her, but to declare the Catholic faith in the Godhead of Him, who was born of Mary. See Joan. Damasc. Hom. ii. c. 18. In Dormit. Virg. vol. ii. p. 881. Le Quien, Paris, 1712.

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The works of St. Athanasius have been carefully examined, with a view to our present inquiry; and not one single passage can be discovered indicative of any worship of the Virgin, or any belief in her power and intercession, or any invocation of her even for her prayers. "No one would pray," he says, "to receive any thing from God AND the holy angels, or ANY OTHER CREATED BEING."*

* Benedict. vel. i. p. 561; Paduan ed. vol. i. p. 444.

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PART IV.

FROM THE COUNCIL OF NICÆA TO THE END OF THE FOURTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER I.—SECTION I.

CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, A. D. 340.*

THE link in the chain of primitive writers which connects the testimonies of those who flourished before or during the Nicene Council with those who followed, is Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem. This celebrated and revered patriarch in the Christian household was probably born about ten years before that council, and was ordained deacon by Macarius, and priest by Maximus, who were his immediate predecessors in the episcopate of Jerusalem, and who probably had both attended at Nicæa.

The principal work of Cyril, and which has been generally ranked among the most interesting remains of Christian antiquity, consists of eighteen catechetical lectures which he delivered to the candidates for baptism through the weeks before Easter, and five which he addressed after that festival to those who had then been admitted into the Church. These lectures take so wide and so general a view of all the doctrines of

* Edit. Oxford, 1703, by T. Miles; Paris, 1728, Ed. Benedict.; Venice, 1763, ditto.

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Christianity, that we shall scarcely find a single point of theology omitted by him. He professes to instruct the catechumens in every branch of divine knowledge; and, if prayers and supplications to the Virgin had then found a place among the devotions of the faithful, it is scarcely to be conceived that no mention would have been made of such a duty or practice, nor any expression have fallen from him which could be supposed to allude to it. Such, however, is the case; and that too not only when his subject might appear to lead his thoughts into another channel, but when his line of argument would seem naturally to suggest a reference to the religious honours paid to the Virgin. Rather we would say, in various instances, the total omission of her name affords conclusive evidence that the belief and practice of the Roman Church in the present day had no place in the Catholic Church in the days of Cyril.

Let us take for example the Confession, and the prayers in the Mass both before and after the consecration of the host, and compare them with the record given of corresponding addresses in the time of Cyril. The Confession thus begins: "I confess to God Almighty, to the blessed Mary ever-Virgin, to the blessed Michael the Archangel, to the blessed John the Baptist, to the holy apostles Peter and Paul," &c.*

In the prayer before consecration we now find these words: "Communicating with and venerating the memory of, in the first place, the glorious ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of our God and Lord Jesus Christ; and likewise also of thy blessed Apostles and Martyrs," &c. And in the prayer after consecration we read this

* Cat. xxiii. 9.

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supplication: "Deliver us, O Lord, we beseech thee, from all evils present, past, and to come; and by the intercession of the blessed and glorious ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of God, with thy blessed Apostles," &c.

But Cyril, when describing the order in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist observed by the Church in his day, though he tells us that they made mention of archangels, apostles, and martyrs, yet makes no allusion whatever to the Virgin Mary. Could this be so, if she held in those days that place in the religious services of Christians which she now holds in the Church of Rome?

"After this" (after the priest has said, "Let us give thanks to the Lord," and the people have responded, "It is meet and right,") "we make mention of the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and the stars, and all the creation rational and irrational, visible and invisible, angels, archangels, &c., virtually employing the expression of David, 'Magnify the Lord with me.'" "Then* we make mention also of those who have fallen asleep before us, first patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, that by their prayers and intercessions God would receive our supplications."

If the Church of Christ taught then as the Church of Rome now teaches, that the Virgin Mary was "exalted above the Choir of Angels into the kingdom of heaven, to the ethereal chamber in which the King of kings sits on his starry throne," could Cyril of

* It has been held that this second paragraph is an interpolation of a much later date than Cyril's own work; but, without some stronger arguments than we have yet seen, we could not pronounce against its genuineness. If it is the production of a subsequent age, the argument in the text becomes only stronger and more remarkable.

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Jerusalem, when detailing with such minuteness the various particulars of the service which he daily witnessed, have omitted all mention of her name?

Again, in this extraordinary and interesting compendium of Christian doctrine, Cyril dwells with much fulness of argument and illustration on the divine generation of Christ by the Holy Spirit, and of the Virgin Mary. He exposes with much evident anxiety the baneful heresy of those who held that our Lord was not born of a Virgin, but was the son of Joseph and of Mary. In the course of his argument proving Christ to be God of the substance of his Father begotten before the worlds, and man of the substance of his mother born in the world, many occasions offered themselves, which would not only have naturally admitted, but have called for, a statement of the judgment of the Church, or at least some reference to it as a doctrine acknowledged by all:* and yet not one word as to her nature, or character, or the honour due to her name, or her advocacy with God, or invocations of her patronage, occurs throughout. Cyril speaks of her as "the pure and holy Virgin Mary;" he speaks of Christ as "God born of the Virgin;"† he applies to her the word "theotocos," "she who gave birth to God;" just as we shall find the most approved writers of the Church of England speaking of her, but nothing more. We find no allusion to her birth or her death, or to her state after death; nor any reference to her life, except just so far as the Gospel itself informs us of her. In the following passages the Annunciation to Mary of the birth of our Lord, the fact of her con-

* Cat. x. 19. † Cat. xii. 24.

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ception of Christ by the Holy Spirit, the affectionate commendation of her to the care of St. John, made by our Saviour on the cross, are cursorily mentioned and argued from as acknowledged verities; but not a syllable occurs which would lead us to suppose that the Christian Catechist in Jerusalem in the middle of the fourth century thought otherwise of the Virgin Mary, or acted differently towards her, than true members of the Church of England now think and act.

"By a virgin, Eve, came death: it was fitting that by a virgin, or rather of a virgin, life should appear; in order that, as a serpent deceived the one, so should Gabriel announce glad tidings to the other."*

"This is that Holy Spirit which came upon the holy Mary. He made her holy, that she might have power to receive him by whom all things were made."†

The following passage deserves to be well weighed:

"And the only begotten Son of God himself, when nailed in his flesh to the wood at the time of the crucifixion, seeing Mary, his own mother according to the flesh, and John, the most beloved of the disciples, to him he says, 'Behold thy mother,' and to Mary, 'Behold thy son;' teaching her the maternal affection that was due, and obliquely accomplishing what is said by Luke, 'And his father and his mother marvelled,' which heretics lay hold of, saying that he was produced by a man and a woman: for just as Mary was the mother of John on account of her maternal affection, not by giving him birth; so Joseph was

* Cat. xii. M. 6. B. 15. † Cat. xvii. B. 6. M. 4.

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called the father of Christ, not by generation, (for, according to the Gospel, he knew her not until she brought forth her first-born son,) but on account of the care which was taken in bringing him up." *

In the following passage he suggests an answer to those unbelieving Jews who, from the impossibility of a human being coming into existence if either father or mother be wanting, argued against the incarnation of our Lord. "Ask them," he says, "of whom, at the beginning, was Eve begotten? What mother conceived her who had no mother? Was then Eve born without a mother from the side of a man, and may not a child be born without a father from a virgin's womb? A service was due to man from woman; for Eve sprang from Adam, not conceived by a mother, but, so to speak, brought forth by man alone. Mary, then, repaid this service; not by man, but immediately, without pollution, by herself conceiving by the Holy Ghost through the power of God." † We are not aware of any other passage in Cyril bearing on our subject; and, in those to which we have referred, there is not the slightest intimation of any religious honour being at that time paid to Mary. He strenuously contends for the true doctrine, (as our own article expresses it,) that "the Son, who is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin of her substance;" but in all his arguments and statements he exalts God alone, and speaks of Mary only as we speak of her, as a pure and holy virgin, blessed among women, the mysterious instrument in

* Cat. vii. 9. † Cat. xii. (29.) 13.

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God's hand of effecting the miraculous birth of him who made all things. The evidence of Cyril is positive and irrefutable against the prevalence of any such religious worship, whether it be called dulia or hyperdulia, as is now offered to her in the Church of Rome.

Before we dismiss this witness, we are induced to quote one passage, though not connected immediately with our present inquiry; because it seems to express briefly, and simply, but most powerfully, a principle of prime importance to the Christian student, to which it were well for the cause of the Gospel, and our own peace and consolation, if all of us who profess and call ourselves Christians would more steadily adhere.

"The Father, through the Son, with the Holy Ghost, dispenses every grace. The gifts of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, are not different each from the other. For one is the salvation, one the power, one the faith. One God, the Father; one Lord, his only-begotten Son; one the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. And it is abundantly sufficient [*αἰναρχες*] for us to know this. But do not busy yourself about his nature or substance; for, had it been written, we would have spoken of it. On what is not written let us not venture. It is abundantly sufficient for us to know for our salvation that there is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."*

* Cat. xvi. 12.

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SECTION II.—HILARY, BISHOP OF POICTIERS, A.D. 350.*

Whilst Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem, testifies that the Church of Christ in the East was in his time free from all such worship of the Virgin Mary as the Church of Rome now prescribes, his contemporary, Hilary, establishes the same fact as to the Church in the West. Hilary, as the most credible accounts report, was born at Poictiers; of which city he became Bishop about the year 350, or 355. Having presided over that see with chequered fortune, but with untarnished character, for about twelve years, and having proved himself to be one of the brightest ornaments of the Gallican Church, he was called from his persecutions and his honours to that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

The chief works of Hilary now extant are his Commentary on the Psalms and on the Gospel of St. Matthew, and his book on the Holy Trinity.

The principle of interpretation which he has adopted generally throughout, representing the Psalmist as speaking in the person of our Saviour, or of his faithful disciples, and giving to each psalm a Christian application, leads him to speak constantly of the Saviour's incarnation; and thus would an occasion have offered itself repeatedly of expressing his sentiments as to the station and nature of the Virgin Mary, had any such views been present to his mind, as our Roman Catholic brethren now entertain. On the contrary, he never refers to any especial honour either paid to her by himself or his fellow-Christians, or considered by him to be her due. She is not alluded to as exercising any patronage, as having any power or in-

* Benedictine edit. Paris. 1693. Veronæ, 1730.

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fluence in heaven or on earth, or as having already been received into glory. Hilary, together with the great body of the earliest Christian writers, is clear and explicit in the statement of his belief that the angels of God are messengers between heaven and earth, bearing the prayers of the faithful to God's throne, and conveying blessings down to those who love Him: he represents it as their great duty and delight, in obedience to the appointment of the Sovereign Lord of all, to exercise every benevolent office in promoting the present well-being and the eternal salvation of those who believe in their Father and our Father, in their God and our God. Hilary speaks with honour and gratitude of the Apostles, Evangelists, Martyrs, Patriarchs, as objects of our pious contemplation; though he takes care to warn us that our help can come from God only, and that the Saviour himself is the only ground of our hope. But of the Virgin Mary (excepting in one passage in which he tells us that even she herself, though the mother of our Lord, must yet undergo the general judgment) he speaks only as Mary, or the Virgin; and that not with any reference to her character, nor, except as a pure virgin, to any honour due to her, but solely as the mother of Christ. Indeed, how very far he was from entertaining those sentiments towards her which we consider unjustifiable, but which are cherished by the Church of Rome, a striking evidence is conveyed (among many others) in his manner of adverting to the announcement of our Saviour's name by the Angel to Joseph. "Now our word SAVIOUR is, in the Hebrew, JESUS. And this the Angel confirms, when speaking of Mary to Joseph, 'She shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he

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shall save his people from their sins.'"* Repeating this same sentiment in his interpretation of another psalm,† he employs the same words, except that he omits all allusion to Mary.

In his comment on St. Matthew‡ he animadverts on the misrepresentations of irreligious men, who took occasion from the words of Scripture to form an unworthy estimate of Mary's character; and he maintains (as many divines of the Reformed Church have maintained) that she never had any children by Joseph after our blessed Saviour's birth: a point which, with his equally pious contemporary, Basil, whose testimony we must soon examine, we may well leave as Scripture has left it.

The passage, however, to which we have already alluded, and in which he speaks of the necessity under which Mary was, though she were the mother of our Lord yet not less than all others, of undergoing the future and final judgment of God, requires the serious and candid consideration of all who would defend the present Roman doctrine concerning the blessed Virgin by the evidence of saints and doctors of the primitive Church. In citing this passage, and in laying side by side with it the sentiments of Hilary elsewhere expressed as to those who are to be judged, we express no opinion as to the soundness of his doctrine, or the accuracy of his quotations, or of his interpretation of Scripture. If his views approve themselves as correct, that will add nothing to the strength of our argument; if we must withhold our assent from them, that will not detract one iota from its force; the simple question being, What is the evidence borne by Hilary on the

* Ps. 66, p. 186. Veronæ, p. 210. † Ps. 51. Veronæ, p. 93.
‡ Matt. i. p. 612. Veronæ, 671.

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worship and invocation of the Virgin Mary? We find that he never speaks of her as an object of religious reverence; and we now ask, Had Hilary entertained towards her such sentiments as we find expressed in the authorized services of the Roman Church, could he have written such passages as the following?

"He who believeth in me is not judged, but passes from death unto life; but he who believeth not is already judged. Since, then, the saint is not to be judged, who is to pass from death into life, and the infidel is already judged to punishment, it is understood that judgment is left for those who, according to the nature of their deeds between sins and faith, are to be judged."*

"The Prophet remembered that it was a hard thing and most perilous to human nature to desire God's judgment; for, since no man living is clean in his sight, how can his judgment be desirable? Since we must render an account of every idle word, shall we desire the judgment-day, in which we must undergo that incessant fire, and those severe punishments of a soul to be cleansed from sin? A sword shall pass through the soul of the blessed Mary, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. If that Virgin who conceived God is to come into the severity of judgment, who will dare to be judged by God?"†

Some passages ascribed to Hilary are constantly appealed to in vindication of the worship of the Virgin, in which that author contrasts the evil brought into the world by Eve, with the blessing of which Mary was the channel. But in the following passage Hilary does not allude to Mary at all, though he is

* Ps. 57, p. 126. Veronæ, p. 143.

† Ps. 118-119, p. 262. Veronæ, p. 294.

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contrasting the original source of sin and misery derived from a woman with the restoration of fallen man by Christ, made known by a kind of retribution first to women. He speaks of the female sex; of the person of Mary he says nothing. "But inasmuch as some poor women* see our Lord, first salute him, fall down at his knees, are commanded to bear the tidings to the Apostle,† the order of the original cause is reversed; so that as death began from that sex, so to it the glory, and sight, and fruit, and tidings of the resurrection should first be made."

It would be an easy and a pleasing task, did not the object and plan of this work preclude us from entering upon it, to quote passages truly interesting and improving to Christians, which would place in a clear and strong light the spiritual character of the religion of Hilary. At one time he puts before us in very awakening language the dangers which beset us on every side.‡ He describes the perils to which every department of nature gives birth, and against which the Christian must be ever on his guard: the very gems of unknown seas, and gold dug from the bowels of the earth, tempting us to covetousness; the troubles of life, the wantonness and unholy desires of our fellow-creatures, the example and influence of those in high places, soliciting us to sin, with a seductiveness too powerful for our frail nature to withstand. Then he bids us look to God, almighty and omnipresent, assuring us that he will never forsake the man who trusts in Him; but will give him strength against every enemy to his salvation, and bring him safe to Himself at last. At another time he bids us look

* Mulierculæ. † St. Matt. chap. last, p. 751. Veronæ, 810.
‡ Ps. 12[4].

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to the angels and prophets who are employed by their heavenly Master in forwarding our salvation by their ministry, admonishing us, contemplating their holy offices of obedience and love, to lift our heart heavenward; but ever looking beyond them to Him alone, from whom every good and perfect gift comes down on sinful and redeemed man.*

To confess God as our help, and to know that God for our sakes became man, he declares to be a true confession, a never-failing hope, worthy of the gifts of the heavenly blessing†—our only hope.

Hilary's description of the Christian's day, as it was passed by him and his fellow-disciples in Christ's school, must close our present reference to his highly valuable remains:

> The day is opened with prayers to God,
> The day is closed with hymns to God.‡

SECTION III.—MACARIUS, A.D. 350.

Macarius, of Egypt, flourished about the middle of the fourth century. Fifty of his discourses have come down to our day: in them he speaks much of virgin-pureness, with which the soul and body of a Christian must be dedicated to God; but though there would have been ample room and frequent opportunities for referring to the Virgin Mary, (which later writers seldom fail to seize in their anxiety to exalt her,) yet he never refers to her once, except as the mother of whom Christ took his human nature. And he tells us that the body which Christ took of Mary he lifted upon the cross.§

* Ps. 128, p. 379. † Ibid. and Ps. 122, p. 391. Veronæ, 444.
‡ Ps. 64. § Paris, 1622. Hom. xi. p. 61.

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There is indeed a broad contrast between the language of this early preacher and of the eulogists and worshippers of Mary in later times.* Instead of calling Mary the "Spouse of God," as they often do with painful indelicacy and presumption, he describes the human soul, created in the image of God, and after the fall purified by the Holy Spirit, and prepared for the heavenly visitor, as that spouse. Macarius could not have so written, had the modern notions and language about the Virgin Mary been then prevalent. Macarius speaks much and beautifully of prayer and praise, but it is prayer and praise addressed only to God.

The following sentiments, part of the twentieth homily, taken one by one, are so utterly inconsistent with the modern doctrine of a Christian looking to Mary for his cure and remedy, the enlightening and guiding of his mind, his salvation from sin, and safety in death,—and they are in themselves so full of the truths of the Gospel in their primitive simplicity, bidding us to approach God alone in Christ, and to place our hope and trust in no other guide, physician, restorer, advocate, or patron,—that few will grudge the space taken up by the rehearsal of them.

"Let such a soul then ask of Christ, who is the bestower, and clothes us with glory in light unspeakable; not making to itself a clothing of vain thoughts, deceived by a fancy of its own righteousness..... Let us then implore and pray God to clothe us with the garment of salvation—our Lord Jesus Christ; for the souls who are clothed with him shall never be stripped, but in the resurrection even their bodies shall be glorified. ... Glory be to Him for his unutterable pity and unspeakable mercy. As the woman with an issue of

* Hom. xlvii. p. 233.

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blood, believing in truth and touching the hem of our Lord's garment, immediately obtained a cure, and the flowing of the impure fountain of blood was dried up; thus every soul having the incurable wound of sin—the fountain of impious and wicked thoughts,—if it will approach to Christ, believing in truth, will receive a saving remedy from the incurable fountain of the passions; and that fountain that sends forth impure thoughts is dried up, and fails by the power of Jesus alone: nor can this wound be cured by any other. For in the transgression of Adam the enemy so managed as to wound and darken the inner man—the mind that leads, and that sees God. Afterwards, his eyes looked to evil and to the passions, swerving from heavenly goods. He was therefore so wounded as to be healed by no one but the Lord only; by him alone is it possible. For as the woman with an issue of blood, spending all her substance on persons able to cure, was healed by none of them until she approached the Lord, believing in truth and touching his hem, and thus immediately she felt the cure, and the issue of blood stanched; so the soul, wounded from the beginning with an incurable wound of the evil of the passions, no one of the righteous, neither Fathers, nor Prophets, nor Patriarchs could cure. Moses came, but he was unable altogether to give a remedy. Priests, gifts, tithes, sabbaths, new moons, washings, sacrifices, whole-burnt-offerings, and all the other justification was accomplished in the Law; and yet the soul could not be healed and cured from the impure issue of evil thoughts. And all this justification could not heal him until the Saviour came, the true physician, who cures freely, who gave himself a ransom for men. He alone effected the great and saving liberation and freedom of the soul. He freed it

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from slavery, and brought it out of darkness, glorifying it with his own light; he himself dried in it the fountain of impure thoughts. For its own earthly remedies, that is, its own justifications, alone could not cure and heal it from such an unseen wound; but by the heavenly and divine nature of the gift of the Holy Ghost, by this medicine alone, could man obtain healing and attain to life, being cleansed in the heart by the Holy Spirit.... As the blind man, had he not cried out, and as the woman with the issue of blood, had she not come to the Lord, would not have been healed; so a man, unless of his own will and his whole choice, he comes to the Lord, and with the full assurance of faith prays, does not obtain a remedy. What is the reason that they, believing, were immediately healed, but we do not yet see in truth, and are not healed of our secret passions; and yet the Lord has more care for the immortal soul than for the body? For if the Lord, when he came on earth, attended to the corruptible bodies, how much more the immortal soul made after his own likeness? It is through our want of faith, through our divisions, because we do not love him with all our heart, nor in truth believe on him, we have not yet obtained our spiritual healing and salvation. Let us believe on him therefore, and let us draw nigh to him in truth, that he may speedily work a cure in us; for he has promised to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him, and to open to them that knock, and that those who seek shall find; and he is incapable of falsehood who promises. To Him be glory and power for ever. Amen."

In Macarius there is no trace of any other Giver to whom we should apply than God—no Virgin to whom, or through whom, we should apply, no mediator except the Lord Jesus Christ only.

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SECTION IV.—EPIPHANIUS, A.D. 370.*

EPIPHANIUS was Bishop of Salamis, in the island of Cyprus, a few years after the middle of the fourth century. We shall, probably, be safe in fixing the date of his testimony at about A.D. 370. Many Christian writers appear from time to time in subsequent years of the same name; a circumstance, among others, with reason represented as the cause of works having been ascribed to him which evidently have no pretensions to so high antiquity.

Among his genuine productions, the most important is his work on the heresies which had then already appeared in the world to distract the peace of the Church. In ascertaining the testimony borne by Epiphanius on the question of the invocation of the Virgin Mary, our attention will of necessity be chiefly directed to his dicussion of the heresies relative to Mary herself; and, indeed, there are few passages besides that call for any examination.† The panegyric on the mother of God, bound up with his works, is confessedly of a much later date.

Epiphanius, with many others of that age, as we have already seen, regarded those Christians as guilty of heresy who would believe that the blessed Virgin lived with Joseph as his wife after she had given birth to our Lord; and he always speaks of her with reverence, because of the mystery of the Saviour's incarnation, which she was the chosen mortal instrument of effecting. His anxiety throughout seems to be to give her the honour due to her office and character; he speaks with indignation of those who could

* Paris, 1622.

† See Fabricius, vol. viii. p. 275; and Oudin, vol. ii. p. 318.

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entertain disparaging views of her unsullied purity and holiness; he had no doubt of her future perfect bliss, both body and soul, in the eternal kingdom of her Son. But of her "immaculate conception," her "assumption into heaven," her "exaltation to glory above the highest angels," her "omnipotent intercession with the Almighty," the Church's "prayers to God for the blessings of her mediation," of her being the "channel through which every blessing must flow that comes from heaven to man," of the faithful "suppliantly invoking her, and flying to her prayers, help, and assistance,"— of all these points Epiphanius seems to have known nothing. On the contrary, his testimony appears to be conclusive against the existence of any such doctrines prevailing in the Church as a body, or among Catholic Christians individually, in his time. But the reader will judge for himself how far this inference is justified. We are not aware of having omitted a single passage which could throw any additional light on the subject.

The following extract is taken from his arguments against the heresy of Marcion (p. 352).

"'Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' He accuses not all flesh. For how could that flesh be accused which never committed any of the above-mentioned acts? But I will prove the point by other arguments. 'Who,' he says, 'will lay anything to the charge of God's elect?' How will the holy Mary with her flesh not inherit the kingdom of God, who was never guilty of fornication, or uncleanness, or adultery, or any of those irremediable works of the flesh?"

In his dissertations on those heresies which related to the nature, character, and office of the Virgin, he confesses that he had great difficulty in ascer-

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taining the precise views of the misbelievers; and that some opinions reported to him were so monstrous in absurdity and impiety, that he could scarcely bring himself to believe what he had heard. Epiphanius then mentions three distinct heresies:

First, the heresy of those who denied the perfect incarnation of Christ; some of whom maintained that he brought his body with him from heaven.*

Secondly, of those who held that after Christ's birth Mary lived with Joseph as his wife.†

Thirdly, those who on certain days religiously offered cakes to Mary, and worshipped her.‡

In his work on these heresies, he quotes in full the letter§ which he had written to his fathers, brothers, and children in Christ, who lived in Arabia, and who had been troubled by these false doctrines. With regard to Mary, whilst he indignantly asks, How could any one dare to speak disparagingly of her, who was selected out of so many thousands to be the mother of our Lord? and whilst he urges that those who honour God will honour his saints, he declares, that, as to her death ‖ and burial, he will affirm nothing, because the Scripture is so silent on the point as not even to tell us whether St. John took her with him in his journeys to those countries through which he preached the Gospel. He refers to some histories of the life of Mary, and shews clearly that he had heard strange opinions concerning her and Joseph; he believed the report which made Joseph upwards of eighty years of age when Mary was espoused to him.

Among his observations on the first of these heresies, he says,¶ "The body of the Saviour born of

* P. 995. † P. 1033. ‡ P. 1057. § P. 1034.
‖ P. 1043. ¶ P. 1003.

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Mary, according to the Scripture, was a human and a true body. It was a true body, since it was the same with our own; for Mary is our sister, since we all came from Adam."

He afterwards proceeds to say, that "just as the perverse views of some heretics denying the Godhead of the Saviour, and severing him from the Father, drove others to the opposite error, and provoked them to say that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost were one and the same person; so the unworthy doctrines reflecting on the Virgin drove some persons to the opposite extreme, and provoked them to pay her divine worship—making her a deity—offering cakes in her name—assembling together and striving to honour her beyond due measure."

Having then referred to the worship paid to Jephtha's daughter and to the daughter of Pharaoh, as instances of the tendency of mankind to superstition and turning to evil from good, ever restless and fond of novelty, he immediately adds these very striking expressions:

"For whether the holy Virgin be dead and buried, in that case her death is in honour, her end in purity, and her crown in virginhood; or whether she was slain (as it is written, a sword shall pierce through her soul also), her glory is among martyrs, and the holy body of her, by whom light rose on the world, is in the midst of blessings; or whether she remained, (for it is not impossible for God to do whatsoever he wishes, for HER END IS NOT KNOWN,) we must not honour the saints beyond due measure, but honour their Lord. Let, then, the error of those deceived people cease. For neither is Mary a deity, nor deriving her body from heaven, but from the intercourse of a man and woman; determined, as Isaac was, by promise. And let no one make offer-

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ings to her name, for he destroys his own soul; nor, on the other hand, let him be so intoxicated as to insult the holy Virgin."

In all these dissertations Epiphanius alludes to no especial honour due to the Virgin above other saints; but as he began his letter to the Christians of Arabia by charging men to bring no calumnies against the Virgin (for, if they honoured God, they would honour his saints), so he ends the letter with these sentiments:

"The saints are in honour, their rest is in glory, their departure hence is in perfectness, their lot is blessedness, their society is with angels in holy mansions, their dwelling is in heaven, their conversation is in divine writings, their glory is in honour beyond calculation and continuous, their rewards are in Christ Jesu our Lord, through whom and with whom be glory to the Father, with the Holy Ghost, for ever."*

His dissertation on the Collyridian heresy he prefaces by stating, that opposite extremes are equally bad, and the mischief is equal in both these heresies: on the one hand, of those who make light of the holy Virgin; and on the other, of those who extol her beyond propriety. Then, after some very severe remarks against the female sex as the originators of evil, he says that this heresy took its rise entirely in women, who were in the habit of preparing a sort of quadrangular seat, and spreading a napkin, putting on bread and offering it to Mary's name; and then he prays God to enable him to cut up this idolatrous heresy by the roots.

He begins by shewing, that through the Old Testament we never find women exercising the priestly

* P. 1056.

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office; and under the New, if women were to be allowed to exercise it, or to be engaged in any of the canonical ordinances of the Church, it would rather have become Mary herself, the mother of our Lord, to discharge that office. But that was not allowed; nor was even baptism committed to her. These sacred offices were never assigned to women.

Having then described the tendency of men's minds, at the suggestion of the devil, to pay to mortals divine honours, departing from their allegiance to the one only God, and worshipping dead men and their lifeless images, he thus proceeds: "Nay, but the body of Mary is holy! Yes, but not a deity. Nay, but the Virgin is a virgin, and honoured! Yes, but not given for us to worship, but herself worshipping him who was born of her in the flesh. For this reason the Gospel confirms us, saying (in the words of our Lord), 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?' Lest any should think that the holy Virgin was a being of superior excellence, he calls her WOMAN,—as if he prophesied on account of those divisions and heresies which were to take place on the earth,—in order that no one, by admiring the holy Virgin in excess, might fall into this folly of heresy. The whole story" (he continues) "is full of absurdity. For what Scripture speaks of it? Which of the Prophets ever suffered a man to be worshipped, not to say, a woman? She is a chosen vessel, but she is a woman, and not at all changed in nature, though as to her mind and sense she is held in honour: as the bodies of the saints, or whatever else in point of honour I might mention more excellent; as Elijah, a virgin from his birth, and continuing so throughout, and being taken up did not see death; as John, who

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lay upon the bosom of our Lord, whom Jesus loved; as the holy Thecla; and as Mary, honoured above her, because of the dispensation of which she was deemed worthy. But neither is Elijah, though among the living, an object of worship; nor is John an object of worship, though by his own prayer, or rather by receiving grace from God, he made his death wonderful; nor is Thecla, nor any one of the saints, an object of worship. For the old error shall not lord it over us, that we should leave the Living One, and worship things made by him. 'For they served and worshipped the creature more than the Creator.' For, if he willeth not that the angels be worshipped, how much more is he unwilling that worship should be paid to her who was born of Anna, and was given to Anna from Joachim, given to the father and mother by promise, but nevertheless not born differently from the nature of man?"

The remainder of the paragraph refers to what Epiphanius calls "a tradition, and the history of Mary;" which stated that the birth of Mary was promised by an angel to Joachim, but was by no means out of the ordinary course of nature.

Again, he thus proceeds, "God the Word, as a Creator and of authority over the thing, formed himself from the Virgin, as from the earth, having clothed himself with flesh from the holy Virgin; but, nevertheless, not a virgin to be worshipped, nor that he might make her a deity,—not that we might offer in her name, not that after so many generations women should become priestesses. God willed not this to take place in Salome, nor in Mary herself. He suffered her not to administer baptism, nor to bless the disciples; he did not commission her to rule upon earth: but only ap-

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pointed this, that she should be a holy thing, and be deemed worthy of his kingdom. Whence, then, is the coiling serpent? Whence are his crooked counsels renewed? Let Mary be in honour; but let the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be worshipped. Let no one worship Mary. The mystery [that sacred thing, religious worship] is assigned, I do not say, to no woman, but not even to any man: it is assigned to God. Neither do angels receive that ascription of glory [that doxology]. Let these errors written in the hearts of the deceived be wiped away. Let the evil generated at the tree be obliterated from our sight. Let the creature turn again to his Lord. Let Eve, with Adam, reverently learn to honour God only; let her not be led by the voice of the serpent; but let her abide steadfast by the command of God, 'Eat not of the tree.' And yet the tree was not the error, but the disobedience of her error arose by means of the tree. Let no one eat of the error which has arisen by means of holy Mary: for though the tree be beautiful, yet it is not given for food; and though Mary be most beautiful, and holy, and honoured, yet she is not intended to be worshipped. Let Eve, our mother, be honoured, as having been formed by God; but let her not be listened to, lest she persuade her children to eat of the tree, and transgress the commandment. And how many more things might be said? for these silly women offer to her the cake, as either worshipping Mary herself, or they take upon themselves to offer this rotten fruit in her behalf! The whole thing is foolish and strange, and is a device and deceit of the devil. But, not to extend my discourse further, what I have already said will suffice, Let Mary be in honour. Let the Lord be worshipped."*

* P. 1064.

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It seemed necessary to make these, otherwise long extracts, for the purpose of ascertaining the real meaning of Epiphanius: mere insulated quotations often give a very unfair view of the writer's sentiments. And probably few will conceive it possible that any honest man, who maintained the present doctrines of the Church of Rome, or knew those to be the doctrines held and taught by his contemporaries through the Christian world, could have written the sentiments above quoted. It is not the case of merely negative testimony; it is not the absence only of any intimation of the writer's belief in the lawfulness and duty of seeking the Virgin's protection by invoking her aid, or of his knowledge of the prevalence of such invocation among the faithful around him. It is the case of a Christian bishop reprobating a practice (which he calls foolish, and the device of Satan, and which had then lately sprung up in some distant portion of Christendom,) of worshipping the Virgin; and this he does without making any exception of invoking her aid or asking her to intercede. He does not remonstrate with these innovators for not adhering to any established mode of addressing her; for not being content with that worship of her which they found already prevalent. And yet this surely he would have done, had any such mode of worship then prevailed in the Catholic Church. He speaks peremptorily and universally, without any reserve or exception; and repeats the same naked command again and again, "Let no one worship Mary."

It has been said by writers of the Church of Rome, that Epiphanius does not reprove his misguided contemporaries for offering prayers to the Virgin, but for offering her cakes as a sort of sacrifice; and, consequently, that his reproof does not reach the point at issue,

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unless the Roman Church can be shewn to offer the sacrifice of the Mass in honour of Mary. But surely this is no answer. It is impossible to conceive, that, had Epiphanius been aware that prayers were daily offered to the Virgin, and the mercy of God sought through her intercession, in the Christian churches, he would, in so unqualified a manner, have denounced all worship of the Virgin. He says not only, "Do not offer sacrifice to Mary," but "Let no man worship Mary; let God be worshipped." The offering of a sacrifice was one part of religious worship, but so is the offering of prayer and praise equally a part; and Epiphanius, taking occasion from the one part more immediately brought under his notice, condemns all the worship of Mary equally, without any limitation or exception. This is in itself evident; but the case becomes still more clear, and the argument is further confirmed, by a brief reflection upon the words used by Epiphanius.

The verbs used by him in these passages, "Let no one worship Mary." "Let the Lord be worshipped," are precisely the same with those which St. John employs in the Revelation, when describing a worship in which sacrifice could have no part. "I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel. And he saith unto me, 'See thou do it not. Worship God.'"* And it is a very curious circumstance, that whilst Epiphanius himself, in this genuine work, says, "Let no one worship Mary," and "The angels do not receive this honour," the writer of the spurious work ascribed to him, to which we have already adverted, uses the self-same Greek word when he represents the angels as

* Τὴν Μαρίαμ μηδεὶς προσκυνείτω, Ὁ Κύριος προσκυνείσθω. Ἔπεσον προσκυνῆσαι. Τῷ Θεῷ προσκύνησον.

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WORSHIPPING Mary.* The fact is, that, had Epiphanius sought for the most general and comprehensive word for the express purpose of excluding the Virgin Mary from any kind of religious worship whatever,—the falling down before her, praying to her, invoking her succour, singing hymns to her or in honour of her,—he could not probably have selected any word more comprehensive than the word he has chosen.

But Epiphanius says, "Let Mary be had in honour." To which every true son of the Church of England will respond Amen. We discard, as fully as Epiphanius could do, all unworthy or disparaging sentiments of the Holy Virgin-Mother of our Lord. But, in repudiating those who speak irreverently of her, we are careful (as Epiphanius bids us to be) not to be driven to the opposite extreme, nor to honour her above the measure due to her. We honour her memory as we honour all the holy saints of God. Epiphanius bids us honour Mary; but so he bids us honour Eve, the mother of us all (using the self-same word *τιμάσθω*). We honour Mary, but we cannot worship her.

It is too obvious to require more than a few words, and yet it is not superfluous to observe, that the sentiments expressed in these dissertations of Epiphanius prove that he entertained very different notions from those which are professed by members of the Church of Rome now, and countenanced by the Roman

* It is worthy of remark, that this same word, to the very letter, is used by the author of the spurious work (to which our attention will hereafter be directed) ascribed to Ephraim Syrus, when the writer addresses the Virgin herself in the language of adoration, "We bless thee, O Bride of God, and with fear we worship thee"—*προσκυνοῦμεν*. Vol. iii. p. 543,—prayers strangely cited, in the present day, in justification of the worship in the Church of Rome.

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Ritual, on various points besides the Invocation of Mary.

Epiphanius could not have held the immaculate conception of the Virgin in her mother's womb; or he would not have assured us, as he does repeatedly, that though her birth was promised to her father, yet was it in the ordinary course of nature, "not born in any way differently from the nature of men."

Epiphanius could have known nothing of the assumption of the Virgin, now the chief and crown of her festivals in the Church of Rome; or he would not have told us, that, because the Scripture is silent on the subject of her death, he would not dare to express his opinion, whether she fell asleep by a natural death, or suffered martyrdom, or was allowed to remain on earth. *

Of her merits, as influencing our spiritual condition; of her intercession; of her present interest with God, as our advocate; of any prayers, even for her aid and prayers, being offered by the Church, or by the faithful in private; of all this Epiphanius says not one word. His evidence is all, from first to last, clearly, pointedly, and irrefutably against the invocation of the Virgin Mary. Epiphanius testifies that the present worship of the blessed Virgin in the Church of Rome had neither place nor name among primitive Christian worshippers.

* P. 1043.

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CHAPTER II.

BASIL, GREGORY OF NAZIANZUM, EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN, AND GREGORY OF NYSSA.

SECTION I.

Our attention is now especially called to the evidence of four contemporaries, who, although not perhaps personally known each to every one of the other three, yet were united together, some indeed by the ties of blood or of friendship, and all by the bond of one faith, and one hope, and one charity. Basil was the brother of Gregory of Nyssa, the companion and friend of Gregory of Nazianzum, and the spiritual father in Christ by the imposition of whose hands Ephraim is said to have received the holy order of the Christian ministry. The testimony of each of these must be examined separately; and though we cannot regard them all as of equal magnitude or brightness, yet will each star of this constellation be found to shed much valuable light on our path, whilst the combined light of them all united seems to bring the object of our discovery clearly and distinctly before our mind, and to leave no room at all for doubt as to the state of religious worship, so far as our present inquiry is concerned, at the close of the fourth century. Up to that time, at all events, the invoca-

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tion of the Virgin Mary had no place among the faithful followers of the Cross.

SECTION II.—BASIL, 370.

This Christian father and bishop, who acquired the name of the Great, in contradistinction to the multitude of bishops and pastors of the same name who succeeded him, is often appealed to under the honoured title of the Great Teacher of Truth. All Christians, whether in the earliest ages from his own time, or in more modern days, have agreed to do his memory honour; and editors of his works express their assurance that he would take no umbrage at their reflections on his errors, so great was his love of truth. Basil was born at Neocæsarea, probably about the year 328, though some have placed his birth ten or twelve years earlier. He was ordained deacon and priest at Cæsarea; but, in consequence of an unhappy misunderstanding between him and the bishop of that city, he withdrew, about A.D. 358, into the deserts of Pontus, and there spent his time chiefly in religious solitude, which, however, was relieved by the sweet and friendly converse of Gregory of Nazianzum. Happily, Basil and the Bishop of Cæsarea were reconciled; and about the year 370, he succeeded, on the death of that bishop, to the see of Cæsarea. He was suffered to feed the flock of Christ there as their chief shepherd for about eight or nine years, and then he died in peace.

The great number of Christian writers of very inferior note, but of the same name,—not less than forty, probably more,—diminishes our surprise on finding so many confessedly spurious works ascribed to him.

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The Benedictine editor, M. Julian Garnier,* to whose labours we are deeply indebted, has done much towards the entire separation of the supposititious from the genuine works of Basil; we have much reason to be satisfied with the results of his integrity, industry, and skill.

Although the negative evidence of Basil against the existence in the Church of Christ, in his time, of anything approaching the religious worship of the Virgin, is interwoven with all his remains, of whatever kind, not more than two or three passages seem to call for any especial examination. Basil, with all true and orthodox Christians, believed (to use the words of the Church of England) that "the Son, the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin of her substance:" that "he was born of a pure Virgin." And thus, in his Comments on the record of the Creation,† in refutation of those who maintained the impossibility of a Virgin being a mother, he affirms that God had, by his marvellous acts in the works of creation, provided by the operations of nature unnumbered preparations for the reception of the mysteries of the Gospel among mankind. The accuracy, or the inaccuracy, of Basil on subjects of natural history does not affect our inquiry. In this passage he maintains, that, in the economy of grace, the incarnation of the Son of God was effected through Mary, a virgin: but he says no more of her.

But whilst Basil seems not to have left one single expression which would imply either that he himself

* Paris, 1721; and Paris, 1839.

† Hexaemeron, Hom. viii. s. 6. (vol. i. p. 76.) Ed. 1839, p. 107.

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entertained towards the Virgin Mary's name any other respect and veneration than we do, as she was a chosen vessel, called (as others of our fellow-mortals were, though in different offices and vocations,) to fulfil God's will in his dispensation of mercy by becoming the mother of our Lord; or that he knew of any Christians who invoked her name, or sought by prayer her mediation or intercession with our heavenly Father; the evidence of Basil on this subject is not merely negative. There are passages which bear positive testimony to the fact, that Basil did not entertain towards the Virgin any such sentiments as are now professed by members of the Roman Church; that he offered her no worship—let it be called dulia, or hyperdulia; that he regarded her as one whose faith was tried and was shaken, and who needed the renewal of the Holy Spirit after that her stedfast trust in God's promises had for a while been interrupted; in a word, that he neither regarded her as an intercessor or mediator, nor believed in her assumption, nor placed any hope in her good offices in heaven to be secured by prayer on the part of man, addressed either to herself or to God.

The following passage from his letter to Optimus the Bishop leaves no doubt as to the sentiments of Basil. Optimus had laid before Basil some of the difficulties which he felt in the interpretation of Holy Scripture. Among other questions, he requested his assistance towards the right understanding of the address made by Simeon to Mary on the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.* Basil complies with his request,† and recommends him to interpret the words "And he shall be for a sign that shall be spoken

* Luke, ii. 35.

† Vol. iii. Epist. 260, p. 400. Ed. 1839, vol. iii. p. 579.

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against," as prophetic of those lamentable disputes which had arisen concerning the incarnation of Christ; some maintaining "that he had an earthly body, others that it was a heavenly body; some that it pre-existed from all eternity, others that it had its origin from Mary." And then, in explanation of the expression "A sword shall pierce through thine own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed," he thus proceeds:

"The sword is the word that trieth, that judgeth the thoughts, and separateth to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, the joints and marrow.* As, therefore, every soul was subjected to some doubt at the time of the Passion, (according to the voice of the Lord, who said, 'All shall be offended because of me,') Simeon prophesied concerning Mary also herself, that standing by the cross, and seeing what was being done, and hearing those words, notwithstanding the testimony of Gabriel, notwithstanding the [thy] ineffable knowledge of the divine conception, notwithstanding the great display of miracles; yet, after all, saith he, there shall arise a certain wavering, even in thy own soul. For it behoved the Lord to taste death for every man, and, by making a propitiation for the world, to save all men by his blood. Consequently, even thee thyself also, who hast been instructed from above in the things of the Lord, some doubt shall affect. This is the sword." Basil then proceeds to explain the remaining clause in Simeon's address to Mary, thus:

"'That the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed.' He intimates, that after the offence taken at the cross of Christ, both by the disciples and Mary, some remedy should speedily come from the Lord,

* Heb. iv. 12.

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confirming their hearts in their faith on Him. Thus we know that Peter, after having been offended, held the faith of Christ more stedfastly. The weakness and frailty of human nature were proved, in order that the power of God might be shewn."

Now, without adopting, or rejecting, Basil's interpretation of Simeon's address to the Virgin Mary, it is impossible to believe that one who entertained these sentiments could at the same time have held the doctrines concerning the Virgin Mary which the Church of Rome teaches her members to hold. We cannot wonder at the expression which the Benedictine editor uses, both in a marginal note and in the index, "This of Basil is not quite a fair opinion concerning the holy Mother of God." "Basil, not very decorously [minus belle] thinks that Mary herself wavered at the time of the Passion." In a note, also, the same editor expresses his persuasion that he shall not give Basil offence, if he says, that in this point he had departed from the Gospel history, and from the true interpretation of Simeon's words. He considers Basil to have drawn his view from Origen, and tells us that others had followed him in adopting the same interpretation. Whence Basil derived his view, or how far his is the true interpretation of the passage, has nothing to do with the object of our present inquiry. Basil is here proved to have held sentiments altogether incompatible with the present belief and practice of the Roman Church concerning the Virgin Mary.

The volumes which contain the genuine productions of Basil (like the works of almost every ancient writer) remind us of the recklessness with which the errors of subsequent ages were ascribed to those primitive teachers of our holy faith. Thus, in a supposititious letter,

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said to have been addressed by Basil to Julian the Apostate,* the following sentiments occur: "I acknowledge the incarnation of the Son, and that the holy Mary, who bare him in the flesh, is the mother of God:† and I receive the holy Apostles, Prophets, and Martyrs, and call upon them for their supplication to God,—I mean, by their mediation,—that the merciful God would have pity upon me, and that I might have redemption and remission of my offences. Whence also I honour and worship their pictures and representations, especially since these were delivered down to us from the Apostles, and are not forbidden, but are recorded in all our churches." These are sentiments as much opposed to the genuine remains of Basil, as they are to the sentiments of the Church of England now. By such forgeries the authority of the early Fathers has been too long surreptitiously made to countenance the errors of faith and worship which crept into the Church long after those holy men had fallen asleep in Christ. By no labours, perhaps, can the learning and ability of the lovers of truth, and the faithful sons of the Church of Christ, promote the cause of primitive worship more effectually, than by clearing the field of Christian antiquity of those spurious and noxious weeds which the enemy of truth has from age to age sown so artfully, choking in many cases the genuine and good seed, in others mingling subtle poison with the wholesome fruits of God's truth. Much has been done already, but we shall be more and more con-

* Epist. 360. See Vit. Bas. c. viii.

† To the spurious homily "Upon the holy generation of Christ," in which its author dwells on the perpetual virginity of Mary, we need not advert. The Benedictine editors themselves place it in the Appendix, as in their judgment spurious.

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vinced, as our inquiry proceeds, that much remains to be done.

Before we leave this venerable and holy teacher of Christ's school, the author would recall some few of Basil's genuine sentiments on the efficacy and comfort of prayer, the duty and the blessing of habitually studying the Holy Scriptures, and the consolations administered by genuine Christianity to those who are in sorrow and affliction. The passages bear, though indirectly and remotely, yet convincingly, on the immediate subject of our inquiry: the absence throughout of all allusion to the Virgin Mary, whose protection at the awful hour of death and from the face of their enemy the Roman Church now bids her children to supplicate, is most striking and satisfactory.

It is refreshing to hear this holy man in his retirement speaking (like a voice from the wilderness) of the inestimable value of Holy Scripture as the guide of our life, supplying us with rules of conduct, recording the lives of good men as living models for a child of God, and proposing their bright example for our imitation. No less delightful is it to hear him speak of prayer. Prayer, he says, should ever attend our study of Holy Scripture: our mind is more vigorous then, more renovated with the strength of youth, and is under a stronger influence of the love of God. The best prayer he considers to be that which brings the idea of God more vividly before the mind: to have God present ever in our minds and our hearts, he says, realizes the indwelling of God in us. Thus we become a temple of God when the tenor of our thoughts and our remembrance of him is not cut asunder by earthly cares, nor the mind disturbed by passions assailing us unawares. Flying from all

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these, the man who loves God withdraws himself to God, banishing all evil desires which would tempt him to what is unholy, and persevering in those pursuits which lead to excellence.*

His letter of condolence to Nectarius,† on the death of that friend's only son, is most beautiful in itself, and opens to us the views of Basil as to the fountain and living spring of all consolation to a Christian. Having expressed his own deep affliction caused by the melancholy loss which his friend has sustained, he recals Nectarius to a consideration of the tenure of human life, and the many instances which they had known of similar calamities. He then adds, "Above all, it is God's command that we sorrow not for those who have fallen asleep, because of the hope of the resurrection. Moreover, with the great Judge of our struggles crowns of great glory are reserved as the rewards of great patience. Wherefore I call on you, as a generous combatant, not to sink beneath the weight of your sorrow, nor suffer your soul to be swallowed up by it; persuaded of this, that though the reasons of God's dispensations are hidden from us, yet whatever is apportioned to us by Him, who is wise and who loveth us, should be borne, however painful it may be. For he knows how to assign what is for the real good of each, and why he appoints to different persons unequal periods of life. Though not comprehended by man, there is a cause why some are taken away sooner hence, whilst others are left to linger on in this life of pain. So that in all things we should adore his loving-kindness, and not repining, [or taking anything ill which comes from him,] remember the famous exclamation which

* Epist. ii. vol. iii. pp. 72 and 73; Ed. 1839, vol. iii. p. 99.

† Epist. v. p. 77; Ed. 1839, p. 108.

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that great combatant Job uttered when he saw his ten children round one table in one moment destroyed: 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. As it pleased the Lord, so it was.' Let us make that admirable sentiment our own. By the just Judge an equal reward is reserved for those who acquit themselves equally. We have not been deprived of our boy; we have only returned him to the Lender. His life is not extinct, but is changed for the better. The earth does not cover our beloved one, but heaven hath received him. Wait we only a little while, and we shall again be with him whose loss we feel. The time of our separation will not be long. In this life we are all hastening on the road to the same inn; in which one is already lodged, another is coming in after him, a third hastening: one end will receive us all. He has finished his journey first; but we are all on the same journey, and the same inn awaits us all. Only may we resemble him in purity, that we may obtain the same rest with the children of Christ."

At the close of the next, which is also a consolatory letter, he says, "In these cases argument is not enough for consolation. We have need also of prayer. I pray the Lord himself that HE, touching your heart by his ineffable power, will by good thoughts enkindle light in your soul, that you may have the well-spring of comfort in your own home."*

* P. 79; Ed. 1839, p. 112.

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SECTION III.

GREGORY OF NAZIANZUM,* A.D. 390.

Gregory, called Theologus from his profound erudition in divine knowledge, and of Nazianzum from the city in Cappadocia of that name, was the friend of Basil, and catechist and tutor of Jerome.† He was trained, we are told, in the most celebrated schools of rhetoric, as well in other cities as at Athens. For some years he superintended the church of Nazianzum as the coadjutor or suffragan of his father, who was at that time by age and infirmities disabled from discharging the episcopal functions. He was afterwards called to preside over the metropolitan church of Constantinople, from which he retired by a voluntary resignation of the burdens and honours of that see; and, having passed the ten remaining years of his life in retirement, he died about the year 391, at the age of probably not less than ninety-one years.

This celebrated writer of Christian antiquity is referred to by the Roman Catholic commentator on the proceedings of the Council of Trent‡ as one of those who, "by addressing saints in public harangues," laid the foundation of the modern practice of praying to them; though such addresses ought to be regarded as figures of rhetoric rather than invocations." Gregory's works contain many panegyrics delivered on the anniversaries or at the tombs of celebrated Christians, (some of them his contemporaries,) in which at the close of his collaudation of their virtues he apostro-

* Paris, vol. i. 1778; vol. ii. 1840.

† See Fabricius, vol. ix. p. 383.

‡ Histoire du Conc. de Trent, par Paoli Sarpi, traduit par Pierre François de Courayer, Amsterdam, 1751.

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phizes the martyr, apologizing for his own defects, begging him to accept his exertions, however unworthy of the merits he had been celebrating, and to look favourably on the company who were assembled in his honour. But, in the same harangues, we find him apostrophizing things which never had ears to hear, or a mind to understand: "Such are thy narrations and wonders, O Egypt," &c.* It is difficult to believe that any one who was seeking, not what might by ingenuity be forced to countenance a system, but what is real bonâ-fide evidence of the faith and practice of enlightened Christians in the first ages of the Church, would acquiesce with any satisfaction in such apostrophes. If weighed in the balance of truth, they seem to have much the same force in the way of proof that the orator invoked the saint in an act of religious worship, which the words of Tacitus have, when he is apostrophizing Agrippa, that he sought the aid of the departed. There is, indeed, this great difference, that Gregory entertained no doubts as to the immortality of the soul; whereas the words of the Roman historian imply, that with him the existence of a future state was still an unsettled question. In more modern instances of similar apostrophes by men, who, like Gregory, fully believed in the continued existence of the soul of their departed friend, we yet find, even in the address itself, an acknowledgment of their misgiving, and the uncertainty of their belief as to the power of the departed to hear them. Such, for example, is the prayer made by Frederic III., King of Prussia, in his collaudation of Prince Henry, his son. And, after doubts of this sort once expressed, few probably would in such qualified apostrophes, however frequent, or though

* Vol. i. p. 621.

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made without a similar reservation, see any proof of the belief or practice of the heathen biographer, or of a Christian king. But precisely the same expression of uncertainty, and doubt, and misgiving occurs, and that not once only, in these addresses of Gregory of Nazianzum. It may be well to put the instances we have mentioned side by side with Gregory's. There is a most remarkable correspondence in many of the circumstances of the three cases; Tacitus addresses his wife's father as a beloved parent; Frederic addresses his own son; Gregory his own sister.

Tacitus.	Frederic.	Gregory.
Thou, happy Agricola! if there be a place for the spirits of the pious; if, as philosophers think, great souls perish not with their bodies; rest thou in peace: and call thou us thy family from weak repinings and feminine wailings to a contemplation of thy virtues, and rather with temporal praises ..... let us honour thee.*	Prince! you who know how dear you were to me,—how precious was your person to me,—if the voice of the living can make itself heard by the dead, listen to a voice which was not unknown to you: suffer this frail monument, the only one, alas! that I can erect to your memory, to be raised to you.*	Mayest thou enjoy all these, of which when on earth thou receivedst a few droppings from thy genuine disposition towards them. But *if thou canst take any interest in our affairs, and this boon be granted by God to pious souls — to have a sense of such things*, receive our address, instead of many, and in preference to many, funeral obsequies.†

* See Taciti Op., Brotier, vol. iv. p. 131.

† Vol. i. p. 232.—The whole of this passage deserves a place here. It is full of Christian faith and love. The reader will observe, that in Gregory's reference to the joys of heaven, which he believed that his sister already possessed, though he mentions the glory of angels and of others, and of God, there is no allusion to the Virgin Mary.

"Better, I well know, and far more to be prized, are the things which thou hast now, than what are seen here;—the sound of those who keep holiday [ἑορταζόντων, Ps. xli. 5], the choir of angels, the vision both of other beings, and also of the Trinity most high, the more pure and perfect illumination of the glory no longer withdrawing itself

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But another very remarkable instance of the same doubt and uncertainty, not as to the happiness of true Christians in another world, but as to their power to hear the addresses made to them by any here below, occurs in Gregory's First Invective against Julian.* Having called upon all on earth to hear him, he adds, "Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth . . . And do thou hear, soul of the great Constantius, IF THERE BE ANY PERCEPTION, and all ye souls of the kings before him who loved Christ." And the note in the Benedictine edition thus interprets and illustrates these words of Gregory: "If the dead are sensible of anything. Thus Isocrates,† in the same words, but somewhat more fully: 'If there is any perception of what is going on here.'"

We do not see how, after the expression of these doubts, any sound argument can be based upon such addresses to the souls of the departed made by Gregory.

To confine ourselves more particularly to the immediate subject of our present inquiry, we do not find any testimony borne by Gregory to the invocation of the Virgin; on the contrary, he is a clear and strong witness against it. But here a painful duty is forced upon any one who would make a sacrifice of every thing rather than of the truth,—Gregory of Nazianzum is boldly and confidently cited as one who himself

from a mind in bondage and dissipated by the passions, but entirely contemplated and held by the whole mind, and shining upon our souls with the whole light of the Godhead,—all these mayest thou enjoy," &c.

* Vol. i. p. 78.

† Funeral oration over Evagoras; a similar doubt is expressed in his Æginetieus, as to the power of Thrasyllus to be sensible of what takes place about his children. Bekker, Oxon. pp. 254 and 563.

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prayed directly and unequivocally to the Virgin Mary. The appeal is thus made to his authority.*

"But I must not omit another passage of the same father," (St. Gregory "the Theologian,") "neither will I venture to abridge it. It is the conclusion of his dramatic composition, entitled 'Christ Suffering.' Whatever may be put to the account of poetical feeling and expression, enough will remain to satisfy us of his belief. But, after all, there is poetry in all sincere prayer; every office of Catholic devotion, public or private, is essentially poetical: and if it was lawful for St. Gregory to address the Blessed Virgin as follows, under any circumstances, it cannot be idolatrous in us. 'Moreover, kindly admit thy Mother, O Word! as an intercessor, and those to whom Thou hast granted the grace to loose. August, venerable, all-blessed Virgin! thou inhabitest the heavenly mansions of the blessed, freed from the incumbrance of mortality, clad in the garment of incorruption, known ever immortal as a Deity. Be kind from above to my addresses. Yea, yea, most glorious maiden, receive my words; for this distinction belongs to thee alone of mortals, as the mother of the Word, although beyond comprehension! On which relying, I address thee, and, to adorn thee, bear a garland woven from the purest meads, O Lady; for that many favours thou vouchsafing hast ever freed me from various calamities of enemies visible, but more invisible. When I shall reach the end of my life, as I have intreated, may I ever have thee as protector of the riches of my entire life, and as a most acceptable intercessor with thy Son, together with his well-pleasing servants. Allow me not to be delivered up to

* Remarks on a Letter from the Rev. W. Palmer, by N. Wiseman, D D., Bishop of Melipotamus. London, 1841, p. 28.

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torments, and to be the sport of the cruel despoiler of men. Stand by me, and save me from the fire and darkness by the faith which justifieth me, and by thy favour; for in thee was seen the grace of God to us. Therefore I weave for thee a grateful hymn, Virgin Mother! fair and supreme above all other virgins, sublime above all heavenly orders of beings! Mistress! Queen of all things! Delight of our race! be thou ever kind to it, and to me in every place salvation.' Here, (observes Dr. Wiseman) is the blessed Virgin directly prayed to, considered a protector, a defender against enemies. In short, in this one address St. Gregory sums up all that is contained in the passage considered by Mr. Palmer so objectionable in the mouths of modern Catholics."

To this alleged testimony of the great Theologian, only one answer can be given; but of the certainty of that answer we can entertain no question. Gregory of Nazianzum, we believe, never wrote any of those words: the tragedy, written after the manner of Euripides, was not written by Gregory, nor in his age.* The only difficulty in the case is, how to account for such a citation being made without any allusion to the authorities by which it is pronounced not to be Gregory's. Had members of any other Church alone, or recently, rejected that work, however strong and sound their reasons might have seemed to us, we should not have been surprised at our Roman Catholic contemporaries still quoting an authority to

* The composition itself is a tragedy, after the manner of Euripides, called "Christ Suffering." The dramatis personæ are Christ, his Mother, Joseph, a theologian, the Magdalene, Nicodemus, a messenger, Pilate, a congregation of priests, choir of virgins, semichorus, a young man, a guard.

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which they had been accustomed to appeal; but here we need quote no other evidence than the united testimonies of the large majority of Roman Catholic critics, to prove that a passage has been cited as genuine, which is beyond all question spurious. We need only to refer to the words of the Roman Catholic editor of the second volume of Gregory's works, published in Paris, in the year 1840, on the principles of the Benedictine editors. His arguments will be found in the Appendix.

Another passage has been frequently quoted in proof that Gregory of Nazianzum recognized prayer to the Virgin as an established and common practice in the century before his time. The passage occurs in an oration said to have been delivered by this Gregory in collaudation of Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage. The reasons which compel us to regard this oration as altogether spurious, and the production of a writer far Gregory's inferior in knowledge, will be also found in the Appendix. But if, for argument's sake, the oration were received as genuine, the evidence amounts to very little. It is, however, most highly valued by the defenders of the worship of the Virgin; and, with the view of retaining it among Gregory's works, considerable pains have been taken to reconcile the confusion and inconsistencies which abound in it throughout. Indeed, the Benedictine editors confess, (whilst they extol its importance, and tenaciously retain it,) "that nowhere in the fourth century is the protection and the assistance of the blessed Virgin Mary so clearly and so explicitly commended as in this oration."* But, whoever was the author of this speech, the story which he details is this: That a young lady of great

* Vol. i. p. 437.

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beauty was in imminent danger in consequence of the violent emotions which her charms had excited in Cyprian, who, to bring her into his toils and secure her to himself, had recourse to the arts of magic, in which he was versed, and to the assistance of one of those evil spirits whom magicians bribed by acts of homage. "Justina" (to use the orator's own words) "DISCARDING ALL OTHERS, FLIES FOR REFUGE TO GOD, who had protected Susanna and Thecla, takes her own bridegroom for her champion against hateful lust. And who was this? — Christ, who rebukes the winds and supports the sinking, and consigns a legion of devils to the deep, and rescues from the den the just man exposed as food for lions, and by the outstretching of his arms conquers the wild beasts, and rescues the fugitive prophet swallowed up by the whale, even in its belly preserving his faith, and saves the Assyrian youths in the fire, quenching the flame by his angel, and adding a fourth to the three. Meditating on these and more instances than these (AND BESEECHING THE VIRGIN MARY TO ASSIST A VIRGIN IN PERIL), she throws before her the charm of fasting and mortification, at the same time marring her beauty as treacherous, that she might withdraw the fuel of the flame and expend the heat of passion, and also making God propitious by her faith and her humility; for God is served by nothing so much as by affliction; and loving-kindness is given in return for tears."

If this statement came from Gregory of Nazianzum in its present form, it shews, that he reported without a word of approbation or of dissatisfaction the circumstance of a virgin in peril having, a century before, called upon the Virgin Mary to protect her from the wanton attacks of one who was then a child of Satan,

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exercising for her ruin his arts as a magician, but whom she converted to Christianity, and who afterwards became Bishop of Carthage. The sentence is parenthetical, and no reference is made to the Virgin Mary's help in what precedes or follows it: on the contrary, the orator expressly states, that Justina, forsaking all other aid, betook herself only to God. Still, if the oration is genuine, this parenthesis must be allowed to carry that degree of evidence as to the practice of the preceding century which each individual may consider it legitimately to bear. The objections, however, to its being regarded as the genuine production of Gregory the Theologist, seem to us insurmountable. But here a question naturally forces itself upon the mind. If there is so much uncertainty as to the authenticity and genuineness of this oration, will not the undisputed works of Gregory enable us to infer what were his own sentiments as to the invocation of the Virgin Mary? Will not his compositions, either in prose or in verse, inform us whether he addressed the Virgin in prayer himself, or was aware that the Christian Church, as a body and in its members, so addressed her? And may we not satisfy ourselves as to his own real opinion on the immediate subject of our inquiry?

Undoubtedly Gregory has left quite enough upon record in his own undisputed works to enable any one to answer these questions for himself. The result of a diligent inquiry is, that there is no intimation whatever that Gregory looked for any help or aid to the Virgin Mary, or ever invoked her himself; nor does he ever allude to her worship by others his contemporaries as a practice with which he was acquainted.

But the nature and circumstances of Gregory's

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works take his testimony out of the common class of negative evidence, and invest it with a force of no ordinary cogency. The course of his arguments often led him to speak of the union in Christ of the divine and human nature, and consequently of the birth of Christ. On all these occasions he speaks of the Virgin Mary as a being of untainted purity in body and mind, using often expressions which, though not in themselves and of necessity implying anything contrary to sound doctrine, yet are liable to misinterpretation, and which, perhaps, made the descent to error in a subsequent age more easy,* but none of which imply any trust in her mediation, or any invocation of her aid.

Gregory, moreover, has left behind him a large number of poems on religious and moral subjects, of unequal merit as compositions, still breathing throughout the spirit of an enlightened, pious, and holy Christian. Among these are, at least, thirty hymns of prayer and thanksgiving. Yet, among these it is in vain to search for any invocation to the Virgin, or any address to her, or any recognition of her influence as intercessor, or any power given to her as the dispenser of blessings or mercies. In the variety of his petitions he seems to ask for all things needful both for the soul and body. It is interesting and edifying to compare these prayers, not only with the less solemnly authorized hymns of prayer and praise offered to the Virgin in Roman Catholic churches, but even with the authorized prayers of the Liturgy of Rome. Gregory prays for guidance in his journey, for protection from his enemies, for a pure heart and life, for help and acceptance in the hour of death; but we find no "Mary, mother of grace, protect us from our

* See vol. i. p. 728; vol. i. p. 852; vol. ii. p. 85.

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enemies, make our life pure, prepare for us a safe journey, receive us in the hour of death." Every address is made to God his Saviour: no mention occurs of the Virgin's name, no allusion to her advocacy. God in Christ is, from first to last, the beginning and the end, the alpha and omega of Gregory's worship and invocation. There are, however, both in his prose and in his verse, references made to Mary, and we are unwilling to omit any one of them.

In his oration on the Nativity he uses this strong expression: "Christ is born of a Virgin. Ye women, live as virgins that ye may be mothers of Christ."*

In a short poem, speaking of his mother, he says, "Nonna, praying at this table, was taken away, and now shines, (with Susanna, Mary, and the Annas,) a support of women."†

In one verse he applies to Mary an epithet which the translator renders "like to God,"‡ but which in the note we are properly directed to interpret "pious."

In another poem,§ written in honour of the virgin-state, as an example of the offspring surpassing its parent in excellence, he says:

"And Christ is indeed of Mary, but far more excellent
Not only than Mary, and those who are clothed with flesh,
But also than all the intellects which the spacious heaven inveils."||

Surely these are not the addresses and the sentiments of one who invoked the Virgin or sought her aid in supplication.

We will only refer to one more passage. In his

* Orat. xxxviii. p. 664.
† Vol. ii. p. 1134. Carm. lxix.
‡ Vol. ii. p. 308. v. 199.
§ P. 336. v. 694.
|| To this passage the index refers us thus: "Mary inferior to Christ, superior to all others." Her inferiority is expressed in the text; of her superiority Gregory says not a word.

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sermon on the Nativity he calls upon the Christian to honour Bethlehem and the manger; to hasten with the star, and offer with the Magi, and to worship with the shepherds, and sing with the angels and archangels—"Let there," says the preacher, "be one united celebration made by the powers of heaven and earth; for I am persuaded that they join in this festival."* Of Mary he there says nothing.

SECTION IV.—EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN, 370–380.†

Ephraim the Syrian is said to have been born at Nisibis in Mesopotamia, and (as a tradition, which is much questioned, states) was ordained deacon by Basil. It is generally believed that he was never ordained priest. The place of his ministry was Edessa, and his death probably happened between the years 375 and 380. His works, as they are now offered to us, are written partly in Greek, partly in Syriac, though many of the learned seriously question the fact of his having written himself any work in Greek. ‡ A legend, involving a miraculous interposition, and which has not improperly been said to savour of the fabulous, records that he spoke only his own language till he was ordained by Basil, when he suddenly spoke Greek as fluently and as accurately as his native tongue.§

The great difficulty which every one must feel in searching for Ephraim's own sentiments on any subject

* Orat. 38, p. 674.

† Rome, 1732, six vols. fol.; Oxford, Thwaites, 1709; Vossius, Cologne, 1603.

‡ Theodoret, l. iv. c. 26, and Sozomen, l. iii. c. 16, say that Ephraim was unacquainted with Greek. See Tillemont, l. viii. p. 743. And Jerome says, that Ephraim wrote in Syriac, and that he had himself read a work of Ephraim's on the Holy Spirit, translated into Greek.

§ See Fabricius, vol. viii. p. 217.

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of theological interest, is the arduous and almost hopeless task of separating his genuine works from those supposititious productions with which they are mingled. Another Ephraim, called the Younger, lived about the middle of the sixth century; and we are assured that many of the works, now ascribed to the elder Ephraim of Edessa, would with more justice be considered as the productions of the younger Ephraim, if not of some yet later writer. *

Some writers reject all those works as unauthentic which are found only in Greek translations; others have set their stamp of authenticity on writings ascribed to Ephraim, which many upright judges find themselves compelled to pronounce spurious. Cardinal Bellarmin says he had only read some few of the works of Ephraim; and declares himself unable to pronounce whether they were all genuine, or mingled with some spurious compositions.† Among those who would go far towards banishing the works, now published as Ephraim's, from the catalogue of witnesses to primitive Christian doctrine, are Rivet and Tentzel;‡ while the Roman editor, Asseman, seems bent on admitting as genuine, with few exceptions, whatever has been handed down under the name of Ephraim. It is very disappointing to find one, who had at his command so great a variety of valuable means for forming a correct judgment, suffering his zeal for the doctrines of the Roman Church to force upon him the office of advocate, and to divest him of the character of an upright and impartial arbiter.§

* See Fabricius, vol. viii. p. 540. † Op. Eph. vol. i. p. lvii.

‡ See Tillemont, p. 746.

§ Had the sound principles which guided Baronius and the Benedictine editor in giving their verdict on some of the works of Athana-

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M. Lenain de Tillemont,* who (to use his own expression) had only the translation of a translation to supply him with materials for forming his judgment, has taken a very different course from either of these extreme parties. His criticisms carry with them the marks of candour, discrimination, and research. The canons which he prescribes to himself compel him to reject many of the works which Asseman strives to restore to their place among Ephraim's genuine productions; and, at the same time, to retain others, which critics both before him and after him have excluded. Kohl,† in his account of the Sclavonic version of Ephraim's works, is more rigid than Tillemont, but not so general in his denouncements as Rivet. Thus, whilst some of the writings which have been ascribed to Ephraim must be acknowledged to be spurious, and others are pronounced to be genuine and are unsuspect-

sius, been allowed the same place in the minds of the two editors of Ephraim,—one, the editor of his works in Greek; the other, of his Syriac remains,—instead of triumphant rhapsodies on the annoyance felt by heretics on finding such accumulated support to the Roman system poured in from the East, and on the victory supposed to be gained over those who separated from Rome, by the testimony of this Father's works, then first published; and instead of arguments for adopting these works from the sentence and practice of the Church of Rome as to apocryphal books of Scripture, we should have had a view of the remains of Ephraim offered to us very different from that which this edition now presents. The whole work must be undertaken afresh. But, till a material change takes place in the policy of those who preside over the treasures of the Vatican, the difficulty of separating the legitimate from the spurious in Ephraim's works will be almost insurmountable. The author of the present work made an unsuccessful attempt to learn the real state and condition and circumstances of the Vatican manuscripts, through the kind offices of one of the most learned of our English Roman Catholics; he however at once represented any attempt of the kind as labour thrown away.

* Vol. viii. p. 743, &c. † Petersburgh, 1729, p. 223, &c.

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ed, (except so far as a translation can never be appealed to with entire satisfaction,) a third class are declared to be spurious by some, and are maintained by others to be genuine. In the midst of so much uncertainty, we might have been induced, under other circumstances, to pass on after making only a few remarks on the evidence of Ephraim; or, according to the beautiful suggestion of Tillemont, we might have been satisfied with culling a few of those affecting passages out of the works ascribed, whether rightly or not, to Ephraim, which will never fail to find a response in the breast of every contrite Christian, from whatever pen they came. But when persons of high station in the Church of Rome boldly and confidently appeal to the evidence of Ephraim in proof that prayers were offered to the Virgin in the primitive Church, and in that appeal cite passages as genuine and indisputable which on the very face of them have no pretensions whatever to be regarded as Ephraim's; for us to abstain from laying bare such proceedings, would be to sacrifice the sacred cause of truth to a morbid and unworthy motive.

Dr. N. Wiseman, Roman Catholic Bishop of Melopotamus, in his lectures delivered in the chapel in Moorfields in the year 1836, thus speaks (vol. ii. p. 109): "Another saint of this age, St. Ephrem, is remarkable as the oldest Father and writer of the Oriental Church. His expressions are really so exceedingly strong, that I am sure many Catholics of the present day would feel a certain delicacy or difficulty in using some of them in their prayers, for fear of offending persons of another religion; they go so much beyond those which we use." Having referred to two passages,—one to prove that the martyrs were invoked by Ephraim, a point on which this work is not intended to touch; and the other, to

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shew that both Mary was invoked, and God was prayed to through her intercession, which cannot be found according to the reference ("Serm. de Laud. B. Mar. Virg., t. iii. p. 156,")—Dr. Wiseman proceeds: "There are passages, however, innumerable, in his writings much stronger, and I will read you one or two as specimens of the many prayers found in his works addressed to the blessed Virgin: 'In thee, patroness and mediatrix with God, who was born from thee, the human race, O mother of God, placeth its joy, and ever is dependent upon thy patronage, and in thee alone hath refuge and strength, who hast full confidence in Him. Behold, I also draw nigh to thee with a fervent soul, not having courage to approach thy Son, but imploring that through thy intercession (μεσιτειας) I may obtain salvation. Despise not then thy servant, who placeth all his hopes in thee after God; reject him not, placed in greatest danger and oppressed with many griefs; but thou, who art compassionate and the mother of a merciful God, have mercy upon thy servant, free me from fatal concupiscence,' &c. In another prayer we meet the following words, addressed to the same ever-glorious Virgin: 'After the Trinity, thou art mistress of all; after the Paraclete, another paraclete; after the Mediator, mediatrix of the whole world.' Surely this is more than enough to prove, that if this glory of the Syriac Church, this friend of the great St. Basil, had lived in our times, he would not have been allowed to officiate in the English Church, but would have been obliged to retire to some humble chapel, if he wished to discharge his sacred functions."

This lecture Dr. Wiseman published in the year 1836; and the same author, after a lapse of five years,

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in his Remarks on the Letter of the Rev. W. Palmer,* undertaking to compare the expressions of the present Pope's Encyclical Letter with the language of ancient times, has felt himself justified in making this statement: "The Fathers.—S. Ephrem Syrus, the friend of St. Basil, and most highly extolled by contemporary Fathers, thus prays to the blessed Virgin: 'Entirely renew me, making me a temple of the most holy, and life-giving, and most excellent Spirit, who dwelt and overshadowed thy immaculate womb, Power from on high.' Again † the same must be said of St. Ephrem. Page after page of his writings is filled with prayers to the mother of God, which go far beyond anything that Catholics are in the habit of using now-a-days. The few extracts that I make, chiefly with reference to Mr. Palmer's objections, will afford but poor specimens of the context of his prayers. Thus he addresses her: 'O Virgin, Lady, Mother of God, most blessed Mother of God, ... incline thine ear and hear my words, sent forth from unclean and impure lips. For, behold, with a contrite soul and an humble mind I have recourse to thy mercy. For *I have no other hope or refuge*, my only comfort and quick defence; . . . of my withered heart, divine refreshment; of my dark soul, brightest lamp. For in thee I hope, in thee I exult.' Again: 'Virgin, Lady, Mother of God, ... in thee I place all my hopes; and in thee I trust, more exalted than all heavenly power.' — Operum, tom. iii. Græco-Lat., p. 524."

The Author, in writing these pages, has anxiously endeavoured to abstain from every expression which might unnecessarily give pain to any one; here, however, he cannot but express his deep and sincere con-

* London, 1841, p. 20. † P. 23.

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cern that any person of so high a rank in his Church, and of so wide a fame among his own people as a champion of their faith, should in aid of his argument have thus triumphantly quoted, we do not say, passages the genuineness of which was disputed on one side and maintained on the other — we do not say, passages from works which, though once ascribed to a Father, have been long acknowledged even by members of his own Church to be spurious; but from works which never were ascribed to Ephraim in any age, which are not ascribed to him in any one manuscript or printed book, which were never even bound up with Ephraim's works before the Roman edition of 1732,* from which they are now extracted—works which that very edition itself, so far from representing them as the prayers of Ephraim, proves not to have been his.

The facts are these:—A monk named Thecaras† compiled certain penitential prayers for every day in the week. These were headed as "Penitential prayers of the most holy monk Thecaras, collected from divine Scripture, but for the most part from holy Ephraim, for those who desire to contend against their own inclination towards the passions and pleasures."‡ Such is the heading in the manuscript of the Coislinian Library in Paris. In the Vatican manuscript,§ with the

* This edition consists of six volumes; three containing the Greek works published in 1732, and three containing the Syriac works published in 1736, under the auspices of Clement XII.

† Here it may be observed, that the only prayers of Thecaras which it has fallen to the author of this work to read [Venice, 1733] seem to correspond much in sentiment and style with these penitential prayers, but differ totally in spirit, sentiment, and style from those independent prayers to the Virgin to which Dr. Wiseman appeals.

‡ Ephraim's Greek works, vol. i. p. clxviii.

§ MS. Vat. 1190, p. 1117.

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omission of the word "Penitential," the heading is the same, but the name of Thecaras is suppressed.* These are the prayers which, with this heading, were published in the Roman edition of Ephraim's works. But, when the prayers of this series are brought to a close, a short prayer is introduced from a printed work, "Horologium Græcorum in Mesonyctico," which is also found in a manuscript of the Vatican (Vat. MS. 775, p. 18), totally different from the manuscript which contains the prayers of Thecaras. Then, after this, come the prayers from which Dr. Wiseman quotes,—but these have nothing whatever to do even with the prayers of Thecaras, much less with those of Ephraim; they are totally independent of either Ephraim or Thecaras. The Roman editor, indeed, of his own mere will has introduced, in Latin, the word "ejusdem," "of the same," in his general heading to the prayers that follow — "Prayers of the same to the Mother of God;" but for this he has no more reason than a Latin editor and translator of the New Testa-

* "Prayers like those of Thecaras" (as the Roman editor represents them) are found separately in some Vatican MSS. (not the MS. containing the prayers to the Virgin in question, but totally different), and are published in his third volume, from p. 482 to 492. Then come the penitential prayers of Thecaras (though his name is suppressed—"suppresso Thecaræ nomine") from p. 492 to 523; at the bottom of which page is the prayer from the Horologium. In these penitential prayers (not of Ephraim, but Thecaras) there is no address to the Virgin, except in the middle of the Lamentation on the Lord's day at evening, in which it is unquestionably an interpolation violently thrust into the middle of a prayer to God, who is the sole object of invocation both before and after the interpolated rhapsody. Then follow, from p. 524, the prayers to which Dr. Wiseman appeals, headed each severally in the manuscript Εὐχὴ τῆς Θεοτόκου (a prayer of her who bare God), without reference either to Ephraim, or Thecaras, or any other author.

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ment would have for ascribing the Acts of the Apostles to St. John, because that book followed next in the Greek manuscript. The Vatican manuscript does not pretend to be a manuscript of Ephraim's works, or even of his prayers; for example, between the third prayer to the Virgin, p. 1135 of the Vatican MS., and the fourth prayer, p. 1137, in p. 1136 intervenes a prayer to the Virgin, called by name A Prayer of Barsanuphius:* and, instead of any general heading, or any allusion to Ephraim, or even to Thecaras, as the author, the manuscript calls each separately "A Prayer of the most holy Mother of God;" "A Prayer of the Mother of God,"† &c.; and one is entitled "The Confessing Prayer to the most holy Mother of God." With reference to these prayers to the Virgin ascribed to Ephraim, it is very remarkable, that the Roman editor himself, in his preface‡ to this edition, confesses, that though he cannot bring himself, with some late writers, to think the prayers unworthy of Ephraim, yet in prayers of this kind some epithets were added by amanuenses, either from their own piety towards the Virgin, or drawn from other writings of holy men.

It has been already observed, that these prayers have never appeared before in any edition of Ephraim's works, nor are they found in any other manuscript than the Cod. Vat. 1190;§ except the first prayer, which is said to be found also in Cod. Vat. 663, p. 230. Even Vossius, who, in his dedicatory epistle to the Pope,‖ says that he had brought to light all the

* Op. Eph. vol. i. p. cxxxvi. † Pp. 524, 548, &c.

‡ Vol. i. p. liv.

§ Vatican Cod. 1190, pp. 1133, 1134, 1135, 1137, 1147.

‖ Vossius dates his letter 1589.

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works of Ephraim, some of which had never before been published, especially from the Italian, and more particularly the Roman manuscripts, makes no allusion to any of these prayers. And afterwards Possevinus * though he speaks of the Vatican manuscripts, does not allude to these. And yet Dr. Wiseman, in 1836, and again in 1841, quotes as the indisputable works of Ephraim prayers which, had they been the genuine productions of the writer to whom the week's penitential prayers are ascribed, would have been the productions, not of Ephraim, but of Thecaras; but which even the very manuscript which contains them does not represent as having been the composition of either the one or the other.

But, with regard to these supposititious prayers, the Roman editor himself is indeed by no means free from blame. In his preface † he represents these prayers, (not only those collected by Thecaras, but also those which are addressed to the Virgin), as being found, not only in the Vatican manuscripts, but also in the Coislinian, and, as his authority, he quotes Montfaucon's account of the Coislinian manuscripts, referring to the very page; yet he omits to tell us (what Montfaucon ‡ reports expressly), that the first penitential prayer, with the opening of the second, is all that is contained in that MS., the rest of even those prayers being entirely lost. § Of the prayers to the Virgin, quoted by Dr. Wiseman, that manuscript has not a single trace, though the Roman editor, || in the case of every one

* Vol. i. Op. Eph. p. lviii. † Vol. i. clxviii.

‡ Montfaucon, 1715, p. 426.

§ In Montfaucon the title is, "Prayers collected by Thecaras the monk." Cod. 312, a fol. 310. See vol. i Op. Eph. p. clxvi.

|| See alphabetical list of the works in Greek, vol. i. p. clxxxii. &c.

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of the eleven prayers separately, refers us by name to that manuscript as containing them.

These prayers having nothing whatever to do with Ephraim, we need scarcely stop to remark, that internal evidence, clear and irresistible, proves them to have been of a much later age, not only than Ephraim, but even than the Council of Chalcedon; whilst, in point of direct worship to the Virgin, they not only (as Dr. Wiseman tells us in his Lectures,*) go far beyond anything which the members of his Church are in the habit of using nowadays, but might be cited as countenancing all the lamentable corruptions of Bonaventura when he applies to Mary the language which in the Psalms is addressed only to the Most High. The writer scruples not to say to the Virgin,† "Thou only art the most highest over all the earth,"‡ using the very words of the versicle, "Thou whose name is Jehovah art only the Most Highest in all the earth." Nay, to such a pitch of impiety does the writer go, as to apply to Mary that name which the Saviour of the world appropriated to himself, "the true Vine."§ The first of these prayers to the Virgin ends thus (it is painful to transcribe such an ascription of glory to a creature, however pure and holy): "That, being liberated from the darkness of sin, I might be deemed worthy to glorify and freely celebrate thee, the only true Mother of the true Light, Christ our God, because Thou alone WITH HIM (*συν αὐτῷ*) and THROUGH HIM (*δι' αὐτὸν*) art blessed and glorified by every creature visible and invisible, now and always, for ever and ever. Amen."

It is, moreover, curious to observe, that whereas

* Vol. ii. p. 109. † Vol. iii. pp. 544. 539.

‡ Septuag. Ps. lxxxii. Heb. Ps. lxxxiii.

§ Ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ ἀληθινὴ. St. John, xv. 1.

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Epiphanius, in the passages already referred to in this volume, adopts language to which some of our Roman Catholic brethren have declared themselves ready to respond, "Let Mary be in honour, but let the Lord be worshipped. Let no one worship Mary;" in these prayers the supplicant offers Mary WORSHIP, using the self-same Greek word by which Epiphanius proscribed her worship,* "But thee, O Bride of God, in faith we praise, with desire we venerate, and with fear we WORSHIP, always magnifying and religiously blessing thee."

But it is time to leave these blasphemies, most unjustly fathered upon Ephraim of Edessa, who, if we may judge from other works ascribed to him, would have shrunk from them as the wiles of the tempter, (to use Epiphanius' words,) bent on seducing men from the pure worship of the one only God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

But in the section of Dr. Wiseman's lectures quoted above occurs a passage found in a sermon, ascribed to Ephraim, on the praises of the Blessed Virgin. This discourse† is entitled "On the praises of the most holy Mother of God, the Virgin Mary," and it contains

* The words of Epiphanius stand out in broad contrast with these spurious prayers:

EPIPHANIUS.	PRAYER ASCRIBED TO EPHRAIM.
ἐν τιμῇ ἔστω Μαριὰ. Μαριάμ μηδεὶς προσκυνείτω.	ἡμεῖς σε Θεόνυμφε πίστει εὐλογοῦμεν. πόθῳ γεραίρομεν, καὶ φόβῳ προσκύνοῦμεν, ἀεί σε μεγαλύνοντες ὡς σεπτῶς μακαρίζοντες.

† This discourse is found in vol. iii. p. 575. There seems to be an error of the press in Dr. Wiseman's reference to vol. iii. p. 156. This discourse has nothing but its title in common with the Eulogy on the Virgin found in the Syriac, vol. iii. p. 604; in which there is no address to Mary, and praise is given only to the blessed Trinity.

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many stronger and more decided passages than those which Dr. Wiseman has extracted; for example, the following:

"By thee we are reconciled to Christ our God, thy most sweet son. Thou art the only advocate and succour of sinners, and of those who are destitute of help. Thou art the redemption and liberation of captives. We have no other confidence than in thee, most pure Virgin. We are wholly under thy guardianship and protection. Wherefore we fly to thee alone, and with frequent tears, O most blessed Mother, we implore thee, and fall before thee, suppliantly calling on thee, and praying thee that thy most sweet Son, our Saviour, and the giver of the life of all, may not, on account of the many crimes we have committed, take us away from the midst, and, LIKE A LION, TEAR OUR MISERABLE SOULS TO PIECES. Hail, fountain of grace and of all consolation! Hail, refuge of sinners! hail, best mediatrix between God and man! hail, most efficacious reconciler of the whole world! hail, our comforter! hail, sure and best hope of our soul! hail, sure salvation of all Christians who sincerely and truly have recourse to thee!"

This discourse, however, is no more the genuine work of Ephraim Syrus than the prayers already examined. It is found neither in the Syriac nor the Greek, and only in a Latin version. And the candid and judicious Tillemont, who sets the seal of genuineness on every work which he is not compelled to repudiate, or at least in any doubtful case leaves the decision to his reader, dismisses this work without hesitation, and in these strong words: "Neither the 'Eulogy of the Holy Virgin,' nor the prayer addressed to her, has anything of St. Ephraim. The

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Eulogy appears to have been the production of a Jerusalem monk."

There is a very extraordinary passage in the treatise on the second advent, which has been declared supposititious by some, but whether on sufficient grounds we cannot pronounce, in which the writer addresses the Virgin Mary by name; but since he equally addresses by name the cross, and Jerusalem above, and the kingdom of heaven, and since the whole is an imaginary representation of what will happen to a condemned soul, and has nothing to do with our worship on earth, nothing needs to be done more than to lay it open before the reader. The following is represented as the language of the lost, mingled with groans and bitter cries, when they see themselves left altogether by the Lord and his saints:*

"Farewell, ye holy and just, from whom we are separated; friends and relations, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, apostles, prophets, and martyrs of the Lord! Farewell, lady, who didst give birth to God! thou indeed didst labour much, exhorting us to save ourselves,† but we would not repent and be saved. Farewell thou, too, honoured and life-giving cross! farewell thou paradise of delight, which the Lord planted! farewell, Jerusalem, who art above, the mother of the first-born! farewell, kingdom of heaven, that hast no end!—fare ye all well!—we shall never see you again; we are going to judgement, which hath no end or rest." On this passage, however, it must be observed, that whilst the Virgin Mary seems to be represented as having laboured in exhorting the miserable sinners to repent and be

* Vol. ii. p. 220.

† παρακαλοῦσα—in another place it is παρακαλοῦσα ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν.

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saved, yet, in the language of Ephraim, that implies no belief as to her personal good offices, or as to any power of addressing herself to the minds of sinners; for the same writer, in another treatise on the same subject, represents "Our Mother Jerusalem above as calling upon us with love and desire to come to her: 'Come to me, come to me, my desired children. In the bridechamber of your Lord let your numbers be magnified in the light of the holy angels. Let me see you with glory and honour, with joy and exaltation. Desire me, my children, as I desire you.'" *

But whilst in no one of the works† which we may with anything approaching satisfactory assurance regard as Ephraim's, can we find any address to the Virgin, or any expression of dependence on her intercession, or her influence with God, or her merits, many passages occur in which the absence of all mention of the Virgin's name seems to afford strong evidence that the writer did not think of her as her worshipper, or recur to her as an exalted and especial object of pious meditation.‡ The following is an exam-

* Vol. i. p. 169.

† "The Lamentations of the Virgin," edited by Vossius, and found only in Latin, an anonymous writer (Letter dated Oscott, 1843, p. 48) has lately declared to be attributed to Ephraim by the Maronite and Jacobite Syrians, who sing them in Syriac on Good Friday. But all that Asseman says in the passage (vol. iii. p. liv.) probably referred to is, that "Those Syrian Christians sang Ephræmian lamentations, from which this lamentation edited by Vossius appears to be taken." But that this is widely different from their being acknowledged as the productions of Ephraim, we are warned (vol. i. p. xvi.), where the editor tells us that they are in error who ascribe to Ephraim all the hymns that occur in the offices of the Syrians under his name; because these are not always Ephraim's, but are only written agreeably to the rule of Ephraim's metre.

‡ See, also, the work called the Ascetic Discourse, vol. i. p. 63.

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ple of such testimony. In his exhortation to fly to God in prayer when we are assailed by the enemy, urging his brethren by a succession of holy thoughts to keep their minds from what is evil, he assures them that they need never to be in want of a proper subject of meditation; and he thus proceeds: "We have what we may meditate upon at all times. We have the angels, we have the archangels; we have the powers, the glorious dominions, we have the cherubim and seraphim; we have ourselves; we have God, the Sovereign of all, that glorious and holy name; we have the prophets, we have the apostles; we have the holy Gospels, the words of the Lord; we have the martyrs, we have all the saints, we have the confessors; we have the holy Fathers, patriarchs; we have the shepherds, we have the priests; we have the heavens, and all things in them! Think on these things, and you shall be the sons of the Lord God by the grace and mercy of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and power, now and for ever through all eternity. Amen."*

If the Virgin Mary had possessed that place in this writer's mind which our Roman Catholic brethren now assign to her in theirs;—if he contemplated her as "being exalted above the choirs of angels in heaven," to have been "taken up into the ethereal bride-chamber, in which the King of kings sits on his starry throne;" to be the "refuge of sinners," "the queen of angels, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and all saints;"—can we conceive that when enumerating all the subjects of a Christian's contemplation, from the eternal Father down to the Christian himself, he could have omitted all mention of Mary?

* Vol. i. p. 198.

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It is curious to remark, that, though in the first volume of the works in the Roman edition, Ephraim refers us to Symeon as a just and pious man, and to others, such as Martha and Mary, as patterns for our imitation in devotion, and speaks especially of purity, chastity, and humility, yet he never on these occasions adverts to Mary. We are not aware of her name being mentioned throughout the entire volume as an object of honour, or admiration, or gratitude.

Instead, then, of agreeing with Dr. Wiseman, that, "if this glory of the Syriac Church had lived in our times, he would not have been allowed to officiate in the English Church, but would have been obliged to retire to some humble chapel, if he wished to discharge his sacred functions," because, according to Dr. Wiseman, he uses expressions when addressing the Virgin stronger than are ever used by any of the Roman Church now; instead of allowing that page after page of Ephraim's writings is filled with prayers to the mother of God; we challenge the most zealous and indefatigable advocate of her worship to bring forward one single passage which an upright and enlightened criticism would pronounce genuine, and which contains the record of one single act of adoration or invocation of Mary, either by Ephraim himself, or by any one of his contemporaries. The prayers so confidently cited by Dr. Wiseman have nothing whatever to do with Ephraim the Syrian of Edessa as their author or recorder.

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SECTION V.—GREGORY OF NYSSA, A.D. 390.*

Gregory, brother of Basil the Great, devoted himself for many years to the calling of an orator and rhetorician. About the age of forty, and about the year 372, he was consecrated Bishop of Nyssa, in Cappadocia, by Basil. He was a married man, for Gregory of Nazianzum† condoles with him on the loss of his wife after he had been admitted into the Christian priesthood. In common with many of his contemporaries, he suffered much discomfort and persecution in consequence of the bitter controversies which distracted the Church. The time of his release by death from the burden and cares of a servant of Christ is not certainly known; it could not have been before the closing years of the fourth century, for he was unquestionably present at the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 394.‡ Besides those works of Gregory the genuineness of which is not disputed, some are ascribed to him which are justly suspected. On other subjects of theological inquiry it would be necessary to have the question settled, as best it might, which of those works should be received as genuine, and which should be considered as spurious.§ With reference, however, to the question now before us we need not dwell

* Three vols. fol. Paris, 1638. † Epist. 95. ‡ Fabricius, vol. ix. p. 98.

§ It may be well to observe that some of these works must be set aside as spurious; e. g. the Homily "In Occursum Domini," that feast not having been instituted till long after the time of Gregory; and the sermon containing expressions which certainly were not in use up to the time of the Council of Chalcedon, such as θεομητηρ παρθενος. In the Homily on the Nativity, the writer quotes at length from a work which he calls an apocryphal history, and dwells much on the unsullied purity of the Virgin.

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upon that point; for in none of the works, whether rightly or incorrectly referred to Gregory as their author, is any countenance whatever given to the invocation of the Virgin Mary. In other departments of faith and practice, we perceive traces of credulity and superstition in his own mind, and indications of that growing corruption and degeneracy which then began to tarnish many portions of the Christian Church. In his harangues over the ashes of martyrs, (if those homilies be the genuine productions of Gregory,) whilst we are offended by much of the declamation of the sophist, we seek in vain for that soberness of judgement which is indispensable in a teacher of divine things. But in his genuine works, whilst he is writing his thoughts calmly and deliberately, there is much worthy of the pen of a Christian philosopher. Thus, in his elaborate work written against the errors of Eunomius, we find these reflections on the object of Christian worship, worthy of the best age:

"That nothing which is brought into existence by creation is an object of worship to man, the divine word has enacted, as we may learn from almost the whole of the sacred volume. Moses, the Tables, the Law, the Prophets in order, the Gospels, the decrees of all the Apostles, equally forbid us to look to the creature."* "That we may, therefore, not be subject to these things, we, who are taught by the Scriptures to look to the true Godhead, are instructed to regard every created being as foreign from the divine nature, and to serve and reverence the uncreated nature alone, the characteristic and distinguishing property of which

* Vol. ii. book iv. p. 572.

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is neither to have had any beginning of existence, nor ever to cease to exist."*

In his comment on the Lord's Prayer,† which will repay a more minute examination, Gregory defines prayer to be "a petition for some good presented with supplication to God;" adding this among other valuable suggestions, "Have a pure mind, and then boldly address God with your own voice, and call him your Father who is the Sovereign of all. He will look upon you with fatherly eyes; he will clothe you with the divine robe, and adorn you with his ring; he will prepare your feet with Gospel sandals for the journey upwards, and will settle you in the heavenly country."‡

As we might have expected in one who entertained these principles on the unity of the object of worship, and on the duty and privilege of drawing nigh unto God our own selves in prayer, we can discover not a single trace, however faint, of any invocation of the Virgin in any one of his works. But the evidence arises not merely from the absence of any expression of religious feelings towards her in discussions which might not naturally suggest them, and where silence might be compatible with such feelings: When speaking of God manifest in the flesh, of the pure and spotless nature of Christ as man, of God becoming man, taking upon himself a body which should bear God, though he dwells much and repeatedly on the miraculous conception and the miraculous birth, he seems of fixed purpose to draw our minds away from the person of her who gave birth to the Saviour, and to fix them on the office or part assigned to her in that mysterious dispen-

* Vol. ii. p. 574. † Vol. ii. p. 724. ‡ P. 731.

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sation. There may be exceptions which even a careful examination may have passed by unobserved; but in general, when he is most specific in maintaining the immaculate nature of Christ's birth, he never mentions Mary by name: his expressions for the most part are, "the Virgin purity," "the Virginity," and, much less frequently, "the Virgin." His object is to maintain that God became man by a miraculous birth of Virgin purity, and he seems to regard the Virgin as having discharged her office in this mysterious economy of grace when she had given birth to the Redeemer, who took our nature of the seed of David from her substance.

A few examples will suffice. In his work on the life of Moses and his account of the Creation he thus speaks of Christ:

"This is the only-begotten God, who himself comprehends all things, and yet pitched his tabernacle among us. . . . . Marriage did not produce his divine flesh, but he becomes the framer of his own body, marked out by the finger of God; for the Holy Ghost came upon the Virgin, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her." *

It is remarkable that, whereas the Roman Ritual applies the language of the book of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon to the Virgin Mary, and authors† who have written in defence of her worship appeal to those oracles of truth as evidence of her exalted character yet, this Gregory, in his elaborate interpretation of those books, though he speaks very

* Vol. i. pp. 224 and 234.

† Coccius (vol. i. 262) appeals to Canticles, iv. 7, as a Scripture proof of the supreme excellence of the Virgin. See also Breviarium Romanum, [Husenbeth, Norwich, 1830,] Æst. p. 600.

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much at large, and very minutely, of Christ's birth, does not allude to Mary at all. This point is more especially observable in his spiritual application of the Song of Solomon to the Christian dispensation. He considers that under the figure of a marriage is represented the union between the human soul and God. In the course of his discussion he refers to St. John lying on our Lord's bosom; he invites the daughters of Jerusalem to look to their mother, Jerusalem which is above; he interprets one passage as foreshadowing the angels attending our Lord when he became man; another as fulfilled in the devotedness of the twelve Apostles; another, in the beauty of the Christian Church; he speaks of the genealogy of Christ traced from Abraham and David; he directs our thoughts to Nathanael, and Andrew, and the great Apostle John; he tells us of Paul pouring the pure doctrine of truth into the ears of THE HOLY VIRGIN, but that Virgin was Thecla.* Of the Virgin Mary he says nothing. If from the works of Gregory of Nyssa we turn to the Roman Ritual as established and observed at the present day, every impartial inquirer will see that Gregory and the framers of that Liturgy have not drawn from the same source. Passage after passage in the Roman service on the feasts of the Virgin are applied to her, which Gregory applies to the glory of Christ's divinity, of his truth, and of his Church. Nay, when he dwells upon the mystery that Christ alone, of all the myriads on myriads of men, was born, not as others but, of the purity of a virgin,† he applies no single passage of the whole book to Mary; nor does

* Vol. i. p. 676. † P. 667.

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he speak of the Virgin personally, but only of the virginhood of which Christ was born.*

Two or three passages will suffice to establish these points; though the full force of the evidence can be felt only by seeing in the very writings of Gregory how many opportunities offered themselves to him for the natural expression of sentiments of reverence and worship towards the Virgin Mary as an object of invocation, where we find very different thoughts suggested. In his first homily on the Canticles† he says, "Think ye that I am speaking of that Solomon who was born of Bathsheba? Another Solomon is signified, who is also himself born OF THE SEED OF DAVID, whose name is Peace, the true King of Israel, whose wisdom is unbounded, or rather whose essence is wisdom and truth."

On the mystery, How in Virginhood there could be Birth?‡ he says, "Since one part of Christ is not produced, and the other is produced, the unproduced we call that which is eternal and before the world, and which made all things; the produced, that which, according to the dispensation effected for our sakes, was conformed to the body of our humility. Rather it would be preferable to set forth this idea in the very words of God. We call The Unproduced The Word, who was in the beginning, by whom all things were made, and without whom was nothing that was made; The Produced, Him who became flesh and dwelt among us, whom even when incarnate the effulgent glory shews to be God manifest in the flesh—verily

* P. 668. Τὸν τῆς παρθενίας βλαστὸν.—Τῆς σαρκὸς φύσιν ἣν διὰ τῆς ἀφθόρου παρθενίας ἀνέλαβεν, i. p. 663.

† Vol. i. Hom. i. p. 475.

‡ Vol. i. p. 662.

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God—the only-begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father."

In all these passages,—and many others might be added,—even when maintaining that the Virgin purity was preserved in the birth of Christ,* there is no mention made of Mary, nor one word uttered in her praise; no reliance placed on her merits, or on the power of her intercession—no invocation of her good offices, or of the mediation of her prayers. With Gregory of Nyssa God in Christ is all in all.

CHAPTER III.

ST. AMBROSE, A. D. 397.

St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, has ever been held in high esteem by every branch of the Catholic Church, as well as by the Church of Rome. In a collect in the Roman Ritual (a prayer, unjustifiably, as it appears to us, and unholily addressed to his spirit in heaven,) he is called "most excellent Teacher," "Light of the Holy Church," "Lover of the Divine Law." And many of the hymns ascribed to St. Ambrose the Church of Rome has adopted into her service.

St. Ambrose was born in France, probably about the year 340: his death is generally referred to the year 397. He became Bishop of Milan in the year 374. Through all the works of St. Ambrose we have not found a single passage which gives the faintest indication that the invocation of the Virgin formed any part of Catholic worship in his time, or that he or his fel-

* Vol. ii. Orat. ii. Cont. Eunom. p. 537.

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low-Christians placed any confidence in her mediation, or offered any prayers to Almighty God, hoping for acceptance through her intercession. And this in the case of St. Ambrose is proof of no ordinary weight and character.* For not only are his writings interspersed throughout with prayers and supplications to the throne of grace, (in some of which mention is directly made of the incarnation of our Lord in the Virgin Mary by name,) but he has left us many of his own hymns, which, as we have said, the Roman Church has incorporated into her Liturgy. These hymns indeed glow with fervent piety, and are well fitted to lift up the Christian's soul heavenward to his God and

* It is curious to observe, that whilst the Benedictine editors, who evidently have bestowed much thought and care on the subject, exclude from the catalogue of the hymns of St. Ambrose many ascribed to him in the Roman Breviary; some, which the rigid rule prescribed by those editors has stamped with his name, are given in the Breviary to another. It may not, perhaps, be uninteresting here to have inserted the titles of the twelve hymns allowed by the Benedictine editors to be the genuine productions of St. Ambrose; though with reason they admonish us that probably even these have been subjected to changes and variations in the course of time.

1. Æterne rerum Conditor.
2. Deus Creator omnium.
3. Jam surgit hora tertia.
4. Veni Redemptor Gentium.
5. Illuminans Altissimus.
6. Orabo mente Dominum.
7. Splendor Paternæ Gloriæ.
8. Æterna Christi munera.
9. Somno refectis artubus.
10. Consors Paterni Luminis.
11. O Lux, Beata Trinitas.
12. Fit Porta Christi pervia.

The Breviary reckons as hymns of St. Ambrose, 1. Rerum Creator omnium; 2. Te lucis ante terminum; 3. Christe Redemptor omnium; 4. Jam Christus Sol Justitiæ; 5. Audi Benigne Conditor; 6. Ex more docti mystico; 7. Veni Creator Spiritus; 8. Jesu nostra Redemptio; whilst it ascribes O Lux, Beata Trinitas, to St. Gregory. The reader is referred for further information on this subject to the Benedictine edition, vol. ii. p. 1218.

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Saviour. But in no single line does Ambrose rob that Saviour of his own proper and exclusive honour as our only mediator and advocate; in no one does he make mention of Mary's intercession, under the plea that he is honouring the Saviour when he honours the Mother. Had any such worship of the Virgin prevailed in Christendom as we now see in the Roman Church, surely these fruits of the heart and the pen of the Christian poet would have contained some instances of the fact. These divine songs would surely have afforded ample room for his feelings and his imagination in addresses to the Virgin, had his faith and his understanding sanctioned any mention of her name as an object of religious worship. But the contrary is most strikingly the fact. In the Breviary corrected agreeably to the decree of the Council of Trent, and commanded by Pope Pius, in 1568, to be used throughout the world, many of the hymns are ascribed to their supposed authors. The hymns assigned to St. Ambrose stand out in strong, and at the same time lovely, contrast with the degenerate effusions of later days. No address to Mary is discoverable in any one of them, no prayer to the Supreme Being to hear the intercession of Mary in the Christian's behalf. The addresses of Ambrose are made to God alone, and offered through Christ alone. In these hymns he speaks again and again of the Virgin-Mother,* whose honour and joy was Christ; he quotes our Lord's words upon the cross, "Woman, behold thy son;" he speaks of the believer's hope in life and in death; but that hope he describes as being found, not in the patronage, and advocacy, and intercession of the Virgin, but solely in the mercy of God, who for our

* Hymn. xii.

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sakes became man and was born of a pure Virgin. We must also observe, that whereas the hymns of later ages represent Mary as the Bride of the Most High, and speak of the Almighty as her husband, whose wrath she may appease, Ambrose represents the Virgin as the royal palace of chastity, the chamber from which the Son of God proceeded, (alluding to the Psalmist's expression,) the temple in which for a while he dwelt.* But, when he speaks of Him as a bridegroom, the bride is not Mary, but his holy Church; of whom He is at once the Spouse, the Redeemer, and the Builder. †

The works of Ambrose enable us to infer that he considered the Virgin Mary holy and immaculate in her person, and holy and mysterious in her office; blessed among women; and in purity of mind, piety of soul, devotedness to God, attention to friends and relatives in their need, in a word, in all that can adorn the servants of heaven, a bright example for those who would be approved servants of God, especially professed virgins: and he strenuously maintains, (though sometimes by arguments which may not be approved by all,) that, after the birth of Christ, Mary remained a virgin. ‡ In his work on Virgins, and in his treatise called The Institution of Virgins, he dwells very much upon the excellence of Mary, and he encourages Christian virgins by suggesting the thought of Mary presenting them to our Saviour in heaven; § and had he addressed her by invocation, or offered prayers to God through her intercession, it would appear the most improbable of all

* Ps. xix. 5.

† Processit aula Virginis
Sponsus, Redemptor, Conditor,
Suæ Gigas Ecclesiæ.

‡ Vol. ii. pp. 260, 261. § De Virg. lib. ii. c. 2.

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things that he should not have given the slightest intimation of such belief and practice either on his own part, or on the part of the Church. But so it is; we seek in vain for any indication of the kind.

It may be satisfactory to make two or three extracts as specimens of the mode in which Ambrose speaks of the Virgin: he generally calls her Mary alone; but sometimes, though very rarely, adds (what we are ever ready to add) the epithet "holy."*

On the words of Elizabeth addressed to Mary, "And blessed is she who believed," Ambrose observes, "You see that Mary did not doubt, but believe; and consequently she obtained the fruit of faith. 'And blessed' (she says) 'art thou who believedst.' But ye also are blessed who have heard and believed; for every soul that believeth, both conceives and BRINGS FORTH THE WORD OF GOD, and acknowledges his works. Let the soul of Mary be in every one, so as to magnify the Lord; let the spirit of Mary be in every one, so as to rejoice in God. If according to the flesh there is one Mother of Christ, yet according to faith Christ is the fruit of every one: for every soul receives the word of God; provided, nevertheless, that being immaculate and free from vice it preserve its chastity with unpolluted modesty."†

Thus it is that, when speaking of Mary's character and conduct, he does so with the view, not of exalting her, but of exciting others to follow her example.

On the passage of St. Luke, "My mother and brethren are these who hear the word of God and do it," Ambrose thus comments, "He is a master in morality who affords in his own person an example to others,

* Vol. i. p. 1291. † Vol. i. p. 1290.

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and the preceptor is himself the person to put his own precepts into practice. For whereas he was about to instruct others that one who would not leave his father and mother is not worthy of the Son of God, he first subjects himself to this same rule; not that he might disclaim the kindnesses of maternal piety, (for his own rule is, He who honoureth not his father or mother, let him die the death,) but because he acknowledges that he owes more to the mysteries of his Father than to the affections of his mother. Nor are parents unjustly discarded here, but the ties of the mind are represented as more obligatory than the ties of the body. They ought not to stand without, who seek to see Christ. For if parents themselves, when they stand without, are not acknowledged, (and perhaps they are not acknowledged for an example to us,) how shall we be acknowledged if we stand without? Consequently here it is, not (as some heretics lay their snares) that the mother is denied, who is acknowledged even from the cross, but Heaven's commands are preferred to bodily relationships."*

The heretics to whom Ambrose here refers were those who denied that Christ was very man born of Mary.†

In his observations on what took place at the crucifixion, Ambrose, whilst he recognizes the entire and perfect sacrifice for sin offered by Christ alone, and powerfully sets aside all assistance from others in that work, at the same time suggests the possibility of a strange idea having arisen in Mary's mind that her death might assist somewhat towards the good of mankind to be effected at that hour; an idea which Ambrose

* Vol. i. p. 1392. † See Jerome on Matt. xii.

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represents as the offspring of ignorance in a very pious mind ready to sacrifice self to duty. It is remarkable too, that Ambrose here, as in his hymns, calls Mary, not the Queen of heaven, or the Spouse of God, but the Royal palace, the habitation of the temple of the Son of God; just as the Apostles called every true Christian the temple of God, the habitation of God, through the Spirit.* The same sentiments occur in other of his works.† "But Mary, no less than it became the mother of Christ, when the Apostles fled, stood before the cross, and with pious eyes beheld the wounds of her Son, because she expected not the death of the pledge, but the salvation of the world; or perhaps, because she had known of the redemption of the world by the death of her Son, the Royal palace thought that she might herself by her death also add somewhat to the public good. But Jesus wanted not an assistant for the redemption of all. He accepted his mother's affection, but He needed not the assistance of man."

"We have then a teacher of piety: this lesson teaches us what a mother's affection should imitate, and what the reverence of sons should follow; namely, that they" (the mothers) "should offer themselves amidst the dangers of their children; that to the children the mother's anxiety should be a source of greater grief than the sadness of their own death."‡

In his comment on the 118th Psalm, St. Ambrose thus speaks:§ "Come, O Lord Jesus, seek thy servant, seek thy wearied sheep; come, O shepherd. . . . Come, O Lord, because thou alone canst recal a wandering sheep. . . . . Come and seek thy sheep, not by

* Eph. ii. 22; 2 Cor. vi. 16, &c.
† Vol. ii. p. 260.
‡ Vol. i. p. 1533, and vol. ii. p. 1048.
§ Vol. i. p. 1254.

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servants, not by hirelings, but by thine own self. Do thou take me in the flesh, which fell in Adam. Take me, Thou, not of Sarah, but of Mary, that it" [the flesh thou tookest from Mary] "might be an uncorrupt virgin, but a virgin by grace free from every stain of sin. Bear me on the Cross, which brings salvation to those in error, in which alone is rest to the weary, in which they who die will live."

We must not bring our review of the evidence of St. Ambrose to a close without referring briefly to a comment on the Epistle to the Romans, which was for ages ascribed to him as its author. Hencman, and the Church of Lyons, and the third Council of Aken, with many others, have quoted largely from this work as the production of Ambrose: Lanfranc, Peter Lombard, Gratian, as the Benedictine editors candidly inform us, and even Cardinal Bellarmin, considered it his genuine work. But those editors are decidedly of opinion that it is not the composition of Ambrose; and we will not cite it as containing his sentiments. Whatever were its origin, whether it were of an earlier or a later age, it is a very interesting work: and if it must be ascribed to a time when the Invocation of Saints, and the pleading of their merits, had been established, it becomes indeed a very extraordinary production. On the passage "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools," we read this comment:* "They think themselves wise, because they fancy they have investigated the laws of nature; examining the courses of the stars and the qualities of the elements, but despising the Lord of these. They are therefore fools; for, if these are objects of praise, how

* Vol. ii. p. 34 of Appendix.

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much more the Creator of these? Yet, when they are under a feeling of shame, they are accustomed to use this wretched excuse, that by means of those men" [per istos] "they can approach to God, as men approach a king by his courtiers.

"Come. Is any one so foolish and forgetful of his own safety as to claim for the courtier the honour due to the king? Should any be found attempting such a thing, they would justly be condemned of high treason. And yet these men do not think themselves guilty, who transfer the honour of God to a creature, and, leaving the Lord, adore their fellow-servants; AS IF THERE WERE ANY THING FURTHER THAT COULD BE RESERVED FOR GOD. Men approach a king by his officers and courtiers, only because the king is a man, and knows not to whom he ought to entrust his government. But to secure God's favour, (from whom nothing is hid, for he knows the deserts of every one,) there is need, not of an intercessor, but of a devout mind; for, wheresoever such a one addresses Him, He will answer him."

Whoever was the author of these sentiments, they coincide entirely with those of St. Ambrose in his undisputed work on the death of Theodosius.

"Thou alone, O Lord, art to be invoked; thou alone art to be implored to cause him [the Emperor] to be represented in his sons. Do thou, O Lord, by guarding even the little ones in this humility, preserve those safe who hope in thee."*

* Vol. ii. p. 1207. See also the strong language in which he repudiates all idea of any created being becoming our spiritual physician, or promoting by his good offices our restoration to God; vol. i. p. 1352.

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PART V.

CHAPTER I.

ST. CHRYSOSTOM AND ST. AUGUSTINE.

Two of the brightest ornaments of the Christian world next offer themselves for our examination, —St. John Chrysostom, the glory of the Greek Church, and St. Augustine, equally the honour of the Latin. According to the most generally received accounts, these two luminaries of our holy faith were born into the world in the very same year, A. D. 354; though Chrysostom was called to his rest when he had scarcely passed the meridian of man's life as a labourer in Christ's vineyard, and his brother-confessor was left to toil successfully in the same field till he had passed the age after which the Psalmist bids us expect only labour and sorrow.

SECTION I.—ST. CHRYSOSTOM, A.D. 405.*

John, surnamed from his extraordinary eloquence Chrysostom, or "the golden-mouthed," was born in Antioch of Cælosyria about the year A. D. 354.† His

* Thirteen vols. fol. Paris, 1718.

† Writers are not agreed as to the time of Chrysostom's birth; some placing it as early as A.D. 347, others so late as A.D. 354.

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father died soon after his birth, and he was baptized in his 23rd year. At the age of twenty-seven, he was ordained deacon, and at thirty-two priest: in his 44th year he succeeded Nectarius, who was the successor of Gregory of Nazianzum, as Bishop of Constantinople. From this office he was deposed, and he died in exile somewhere about the year 407. In our endeavours to ascertain the standard of doctrine, the habitual views, and ruling principles and sentiments of this noble Christian writer, the greatest care is necessary in distinguishing between his genuine works, and those productions which patient and enlightened criticism must pronounce to be spurious. The learned Benedictine editor represents the treatises to be innumerable which the fraud of booksellers and the absurd vanity of petty authors* had combined to impose upon the world as Chrysostom's, but which had no pretensions to such a place in literature. The works, too, which upon the whole must be regarded as the genuine productions of his tongue or pen, (as the same authority teaches us to suspect, whilst our own observation can only increase the suspicion,) are by no means free from changes and interpolations. Would that a wide and careful research were instituted by men adequate to the task into the treasures which still remain unexamined! Next to the blessed Scriptures themselves, no department of theology so powerfully appeals to the Christian world for the united efforts of those to whom primitive truth is dear, as the text of the early writers both of the Greek and of the Latin Church; nor would any field more abundantly or satisfactorily repay the labour bestowed upon it. This remark, applicable in the case of all those ancient

* Innumeri pene Græculi.

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Fathers whose remains have been saved from the wreck of time, is forced upon us with especial interest in our examination of St. Chrysostom's testimony. The attempt to support a system, however ancient or however valued, by counterfeit witnesses, and by evidence which will not bear the light of day, even were it consistent with the principles of Christianity or of common honesty, cannot be long successful. Too long indeed already has dependence been placed upon translations made by persons incompetent to the task, or by men who professedly left the original when they fancied they could substitute something preferable of their own; and too long has the custom prevailed, even among the most celebrated champions of theological tenets, recklessly to quote, as genuine evidence of the earliest doctrines of the Church, the unworthy forgeries of a corrupt and ignorant age. The Benedictine editors have done much towards the purifying of the volumes of Chrysostom from the gross and palpable impositions with which age after age had loaded them. Were we engaged in ascertaining his evidence on some other points of doctrine, it would be necessary to speak somewhat more at large on this subject; but for the immediate object of our investigation we need dwell no longer upon it now. We shall cite no passage which the Benedictine editors have not admitted as genuine, nor exclude any which they have not pronounced to be spurious.

On the subject of our inquiry, the result of a thorough examination of the works of St. Chrysostom is the conviction, that from his first to his last page there is not the faintest intimation that he either addressed the Virgin Mary by invocation, or placed any confidence in her merits and intercession himself, or

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that he was at all aware that Christians, either individually or as a body in the Church, had ever prayed to her even for her prayers, or had prayed to God to hear them through her intercession.

But the testimony of St. Chrysostom is not merely negative; on the contrary, the evidence is clear, and strong, and manifold, that he addressed his prayers to Almighty God alone, in the name and through the mediation of Jesus Christ our only Saviour, never invoking the Virgin, never making mention of her name, even in a subordinate sense, as intercessor or mediator.

The sentiments of Chrysostom on the necessity, the dignity, and the blessed effects of prayer are so just, and at the same time so encouraging and uplifting, that, before we cite the proofs of these positions, we shall do well to reflect on some few of the passages which convey his views on prayer. We shall find him exhorting sincere Christians to approach with humble confidence to the throne of grace, taking with them faith, and repentance, and obedient love; and seeking then for no foreign aid or recommendation, looking for no intercessor in heaven but Christ only. These sentiments are not confined to any part of his voluminous remains, but are interspersed through them all: the difficulty is not to discover them, but to select from those which offer themselves. In his comment on the 4th Psalm we read these beautiful remarks on the efficacy of prayer:*

"If I possess justice, some one will say, What need of prayer; for that will guide us right in all things, and He who gives knows what we need? Because prayer is no slight bond of love towards God, accustoming us to habitual intercourse with him, and leading

* Vol. v. p. 8.

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us to wisdom; for if any one, by intercourse with some admirable man, gathers much fruit from the intercourse, how much more will he who has continual intercourse with God! But we have not an adequate sense of the value of prayer, since we do not apply to it with thoughtful care, nor employ it agreeably to the laws of God. . . . . If we would approach with becoming carefulness, and as persons about to converse with God, we should then know, even before we received what we asked, how great a gain we must reap as its fruit; for a man who is trained to converse with God, as we ought, will afterwards be an angel. It is thus that his soul is loosened from the bonds of the body; thus his reason is lifted on high; thus is his home removed to heaven; thus does he look above the things of this life; thus is he stationed by the royal throne itself, though he be poor, though he be a servant, obscure and unlettered. For God seeketh not the beauty of language, nor the composition of words, but the loveliness of the soul; and, if that speak what is well-pleasing to Him, the man goes away with the full accomplishment of his purpose. See you how great facility is here? Among men, when a man applies to any one, he must needs be a good speaker, and must flatter enough those who are about the great man, and devise many other schemes to insure a favourable reception; but here he wants nothing but a sober mind, and then there is nothing to prevent his being nigh to God, 'For I am a God drawing nigh, and not a God far off.' So that to be far off is owing to ourselves; for He is himself always near. And why say I that we need not oratory? Often we do not even need a voice; for even if you speak in your hearts, and call upon him aright, he will readily assent even then. . . . .

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No soldier stands by to drive you away; no spear-bearer, to cut off the opportunity; no one to say, You cannot approach him now, come again. But, whenever you come, he is standing to hear—be it in the time of dinner, in the time of supper, at midnight, in the market-place, in the way, in the chamber,—though you approach within, and present yourself in the judgement hall to the Ruler, and call Him. There is nothing to hinder him from assenting to your request, if you call on him aright. There is no ground for saying, I fear to approach, and present my petition; my enemy is standing by. Even this obstacle is removed: He will not attend to your enemy, and cut short your suit. You may always and continually plead with him, and there is no difficulty. There is no need of porters to introduce you, nor stewards, nor comptrollers, nor guards, nor friends; but when you by yourself approach, then he will most of all listen to you, then [I say] when you ask no one. We do not so much prevail with him when we ask by others, as when we ask by ourselves; for, since it is our own friendship he loves, he takes every means of fixing our confidence in him. When he sees us doing this by ourselves, then he especially grants our request. Thus did he in the case of the woman of Canaan: when Peter and James applied to him in her behalf, he did not assent; but, when she herself persevered, he soon granted her request. For, though he seemed to defer it for a little while, he did so, not to put her off, but to crown her the more, and to draw her supplication nearer to himself. Let us, therefore, take good heed to approach God in prayer; and let us learn how we ought to offer our prayer."

On the importunity and success of this Syrophœ-

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nician suppliant Chrysostom dwells repeatedly, and in such a manner as to force us to believe that he could not himself have had recourse to the invocation of any other being than God alone, or have suggested to others any confidence in the intercession of any other mediator than Christ only, certainly not making an exception in favour of the blessed Virgin. In his comment on Genesis, chap. xvi.,* he furnishes us with many valuable reflections on the mercy of the Saviour, and the holy confidence with which true Christians may rest all their hopes in Him, and approach Him in prayer, with sure trust that they will never be sent empty away. We would gladly embody that comment in the present treatise; but, although bearing directly on our point, it would swell this part of our evidence to a disproportionate extent. On the general sentiments of Chrysostom as to the Christian duty of praying to God only through the mediation of his blessed Son, without the intercession of any other mediator, we will confine ourselves to two short extracts further; the first from his homily composed expressly on the woman of Canaan, the other from his comment on the Epistle to the Romans.

In the first passage we read these words:†

"'And Jesus going out from thence went into the parts of Tyre and Sidon, and behold, a woman.' The Evangelist wonders, 'Behold, a woman,' the ancient armour of the devil, she who expelled me from paradise, the mother of sin, the prime leader of transgression. That very woman comes, that very nature; a new and unlooked-for wonder! The Jews fly from him, and the woman follows him. 'And behold, a woman coming out from those coasts besought him,

* Vol. iv. p. 386. † Vol. iii. p. 435.

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saying, O Lord, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.' The woman becomes an Evangelist and acknowledges his divinity, and the dispensation,—'O Lord!'—[she acknowledges] his sovereignty: 'Thou Son of David,'—she confesses his incarnation: 'Have mercy on me,' see her philosophic spirit. 'Have mercy on me, I have no good deeds, I have no confidence from my manner of life; I betake myself to mercy, to the common haven of sinners; I betake myself to mercy, where is no judgement-seat, where my safety is freed from investigation.' Though she were thus a sinner and a transgressor, she is bold enough to approach. And see the wisdom of the woman; she calls not on James, she does not supplicate John, she approaches not to Peter, she does not force her way through their company. 'I have no need of a mediator: but, taking repentance to plead with me, I approach the Fountain itself. For this cause he came down, for this cause he became incarnate, that I might converse with him.' The cherubim tremble at Him above, and here below a harlot converses with him: 'Have mercy on me!' It is a simple word, and yet it finds a fathomless sea of salvation. 'Have mercy on me!' For this cause thou didst come, for this cause thou tookedst upon thee flesh, for this cause thou becamest what I am. Above is trembling, below is confidence. Have mercy on me! I have no need of a mediator. Have mercy on me!"

In the other passage adverted to above,* we find him thus commenting on the Apostle's benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, Amen." "See you whence we ought to begin, and where to end all things? For from this he laid the

* Vol. ix. p. 756.

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foundation of his epistle, and from this he put on also its roof; at once both praying for the mother of all good things for them, and mentioning also every benefit. For this is the chief province of a true instructor; to benefit his disciples, not by word only, but also by prayer. Wherefore, he says, we will persevere in prayer and in the ministration of the word. Who, then, WILL PRAY FOR US, NOW THAT PAUL HAS GONE AWAY? THESE WHO ARE IMITATORS OF PAUL. Only let us render ourselves worthy of such patronage, that we may not only hear Paul's voice here, but, even when we go thither, may be found worthy to see the champion of Christ. And the rather, if we listen to him here, shall we see him there; even though not ourselves standing near, yet we shall at all events see him shining near the royal throne. There the cherubim glorify, there the seraphim fly, there shall we see, together with Peter and the choir of Saints, Paul, being their chief leader and president;* and we shall enjoy true love. For if, when he was here, he so loved men, that, on the choice being offered him to be dissolved and to be with Christ, he chose to be here; how much more ardent will he shew his love there?"

It may be asked whether it is within the verge of probability that St. Chrysostom, when he speaks of these things in this manner, could have believed it lawful and beneficial for a Christian to pray to any other mediator, or through any other intercessor than Christ alone? "I want no mediator." "She applies not to the Apostles." "Who shall pray for us, now Paul is gone?" Is it possible to conceive that, had he practised the invo-

* It may be remarked, that in this passage, not Peter, but Paul, is represented as the chief leader and president of the Saints, even when Peter is also named.

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cation of Saints, he would not have alluded to it here: and have assured his disciples, that though Paul was absent, yet was he still carrying on the office of intercessor? Instead of this, he tells them, that those who were imitators and followers of Paul would pray for them, now that Paul was gone.

SECTION II.

But to proceed to the more immediate subject of our inquiry: what was St. Chrysostom's faith, and what his practice with regard to the Virgin Mary? Is she made an exception?

For the dignity to which it pleased the Almighty to raise her, that she should be the mother of our Lord, St. Chrysostom held the Virgin's memory in reverence, and very strenuously does he maintain that she remained a virgin unspotted to the day of her death. But, whilst he professes no sentiments of honour towards her which a true and enlightened member of the Church of England would not profess, he at the same time speaks of her conduct on one occasion, and of her knowledge and state of mind generally with regard to our Saviour, in terms which few members of our Church would employ.

Chrysostom generally calls the Virgin, simply, Mary; seldom adding any epithet expressive of her sanctity and blessedness. He never calls her "Mother of God." He declares her to be a pure and unpolluted virgin,* and finds in the Old Testament types and figures by which her office was foreshadowed. In one place,† he tells us that Eden signifying a virgin-land,

* Vol. iii. p. 16. † Vol. iii. p. 113.

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in which God without the work of man planted a garden, prefigured the Virgin, who, without knowing a man, brought forth Christ. In another,* he considers Eve, and the tree of knowledge, and death, when man by transgression fell, to correspond with Mary, and the tree of the cross, and our Lord's death, which gained for us the victory; that, as a virgin's fault caused us to be expelled from paradise,† so by the instrumentality of a virgin we found eternal life. He considers that her superior excellence shewed itself in her admirable self-command when she heard announced to her that she should bring forth the Saviour, behaving with exemplary modesty, instead of being transported by a sudden burst of excessive joy.‡ He regards the flight into Egypt as a means of making Mary conspicuous, and a bright object of admiration.§ She was given, he says,‖ by the angel to the care of Joseph, as she was by Christ upon the cross to John, in order to protect and defend herself and her character from reproach and oppression.

We must now direct our especial attention to three passages in the genuine works of Chrysostom, and weigh well the import of his words in each, as indications of his general sentiments concerning Mary. First, his remarks on our Lord's words at the marriage-feast at Cana; secondly, his account of what took place at the cross; and thirdly, his representation of Mary's conduct and our Lord's words on that previous well-known occasion when Mary and his brethren stood without the house desiring to see Jesus. The question will force itself upon our mind, Could Mary

* Vol. iii. p. 752. † Vol. v. p. 171.
‡ Vol. vii. p. 34. § P. 125. ‖ P. 57.

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have been regarded by St. Chrysostom, or by those to whom he addressed these sentiments, as she is now regarded by the Church of Rome?

His account of the miracle of turning water into wine Chrysostom thus prefaces:* "No unimportant question is propounded to us to-day: when the mother of Jesus said, 'They have no wine,' Christ said, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come;' and though he said this, he did what his mother suggested. Invoking, therefore, Him himself who wrought the miracle, let us then proceed to the solution of the difficulty." He then says, "Christ was not subjected to the necessity of seasons, for he pre-eminently assigned to seasons themselves their order; for he was their maker. But John introduces Christ using this expression, 'Mine hour is not yet come,' to shew that he was not yet manifested to the great body of the people, and that he had not as yet the full complement of his Apostles: but Andrew with Philip followed him, and no other. Nay, rather, not even these all knew him as he ought to be known; not even HIS MOTHER, nor his brethren. For after his numerous miracles the Evangelist says this of his brethren, 'For neither did his brethren believe in him.' But neither did those at the marriage know him; for otherwise they would have come to him, and sought his aid in their want. On this account he says 'Mine hour is not yet come.' 'I am not known to those who are present; nay, they do not even know that the wine has failed. Suffer them to become aware of this first. I ought not to learn this from you; for you are my mother, and you throw suspicion on my miracle. Those who want it ought to come and ask; not be-

* Vol. viii. p. 125.

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cause I need this, but that they may receive what is done with full acquiescence.' And for what reason (some one will say), after saying 'Mine hour is not yet come,' and after refusing, did he do what his mother said? Chiefly to afford to gainsayers, and those who think him subject to times and seasons, a sufficient demonstration that he was not subject to times. In the second place he did it, because he honoured his mother; that he might not appear to contradict her entirely throughout; that he might not expose himself to the suspicion of weakness; that he might not in the presence of so many put his mother to shame; for she had brought the servants to him. Thus it was that, though he said to the woman of Canaan 'It is not meet to take the children's bread and give it to dogs,' yet he granted the boon afterwards, because he was affected by her perseverance. Yea, moreover, though he said 'I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,' yet afterwards he healed the woman's daughter. Hence we learn that, though we be unworthy, yet by our perseverance we make ourselves worthy to receive. Wherefore, also, his mother remained, and wisely brought the servants, so that the request might be made by more persons. She consequently added, 'Whatsoever he shall say to you, do it.' For she knew that the refusal was not from want of power, but from the absence of boastful display; and, that he might not seem absolutely to throw himself upon the miracle, she therefore brought the servants."

Chrysostom's assertion, that Mary was not even herself acquainted with our Lord's real character and dispensation, is by no means confined to this passage; and in some instances it has called forth the animadversion

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of his editors. Thus, in his exposition of the words of the Psalmist, which he renders "God shall come manifestly, our God, and shall not keep silence,"* "See you" (he says) "how he proceeds gradually to open his word, and reveal the treasure, and emit a more cheering ray, saying 'God shall come manifestly?' Why! when was he not present manifestly? At his former advent. For he came without noise, HIDDEN FROM THE MANY, and for a long time escaping observation. Why do I speak of THE MANY, whereas not even THE VIRGIN WHO CONCEIVED HIM KNEW THE INEFFABLE MYSTERY, nor even his brethren believed on him, nor he who appeared to be his father formed any great opinion of him?"

The following is Chrysostom's comment upon the act of our blessed Saviour when he commended his sorrowing mother to his beloved disciple:†

"But He himself, hanging on the cross, commends his mother to his disciple, teaching us to our last breath to take every affectionate care of our parents. Thus, when she unseasonably annoyed him, he said, 'What have I to do with thee?' and 'Who is my mother?' But here he shews much natural affection, and entrusts her to the disciple whom he loved..... Observe how free from agitation he does everything, even when hanging on the cross; conversing with his disciple about his mother, fulfilling the prophecies, suggesting good hope in the thief..... Now, the women stood by the cross; and the weaker sex appeared the more manly. And he himself commends his mother, 'Behold thy Son.' Oh, for the honour! With what

* Vol. v. p. 225; Ps. xlix. or l. † Vol viii. p. 505.

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honour does he invest the disciple! For when he was himself going away, he delivers her to the disciple to take care of her. For since it was probable that she as a mother would grieve, and look for protection, he with reason commits her to the hands of one who loved him. To him he says, 'Behold thy mother.' This he said to unite them in love; and the disciple, understanding this, took her to his own home. But why did he make mention of no other woman, though another stood by? To teach us to pay more than common attention to our mothers. For as we must not even know those parents who oppose themselves in spiritual things, so, when they interpose no obstacle in those matters, it is right to pay them every respect, and to place them above the rest, because they gave us birth, and nourished us, and underwent so many thousand dangers. Thus too does he silence the impudence of Marcion; for, had He not been born in the flesh, nor had a mother, why should he have taken such care of her alone?"

In his homily on St. Matthew, chap. xii. v. 46, we read the comment here quoted. We cannot wonder at the Benedictine editor exclaiming, as he does, very quaintly in the margin, "Fair words, Chrysostom!"* Had a member of the Church of England published such sentiments for the first time now, he would be reproved, not only by his Roman Catholic contemporaries, but by many of his own communion. Could Chrysostom (we may confidently ask) have addressed this homily to the faithful Christians of his day, if either he or they entertained those sen-

* Bona verba, Chrysostome!

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timents with regard to the Virgin Mary which are professed by our Roman Catholic brethren; had he or had the Church then invoked her in supplication, or trusted to her intercession, and mediation, and advocacy, as the Queen of heaven, in dignity and glory and power above the seraphim?*

"What I lately said,* that, if virtue be absent, all besides is superfluous; this is now proved abundantly. I was saying, that age, and nature, and the living in a wilderness, and all such things, were unprofitable, unless our principle and purpose were good; but to-day we learn something more, that not even the conceiving of Christ in the womb, and bringing forth that wonderful birth, hath any advantage if there be not virtue: and this is especially manifest from this circumstance;† 'Whilst he was yet speaking,' says the Evangelist, 'some one says to him, Thy mother and thy brethren seek thee; and he said, Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?'‡ Now this he said, not because he felt ashamed of his mother, nor with the intention of denying her who brought him forth; for, had he been ashamed, he would not have passed through her womb: but it was to shew that she would derive no advantage from this, unless she did her duty in every thing. For what she was then undertaking was the effect of EXCESSIVE AMBITION; for she wished to shew to the people that she commanded and controlled her son, she having as yet formed no high opinion of him. Consequently she comes to him unseasonably. Now see

* Vol. vii. p. 467.

† Even Calvin himself dissents from this view of Chrysostom, which is also that of Ambrose, and says their views are groundless, and unworthy of the piety of the Virgin.—Calvin in loc. vol. vi. p. 142.

‡ De Sacy adopts the views of Grotius.—Vol. xxix. p. 440.

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the foolish arrogance* both of herself and of them! Whereas they ought to have entered, and heard him with the multitude; or, had they been unwilling to do this, to have waited till he had finished his discourse, and then to have approached him; they call for him out: and this they do before all, exhibiting their excessive ambition, and wishing to shew that they commanded him with great authority. A point which the Evangelist marks with disapprobation; for it was to intimate this that he said, 'Whilst he was yet speaking to the multitude,'—as much as if he had said 'What! was there no other opportunity? what! could they not have conversed with him in private? and what, after all, did they want to say? If it was on the doctrines of the truth, then it was right he should propound to all in common, and to speak before all, that others also might be benefited. But if it was on other subjects, of interest to themselves, they ought not to have been thus urgent. For if he would not suffer a man to bury his father, that his following of Him might not be broken off, much more ought his address not to have been interrupted for things which were not of interest to him.' Hence it is evident that they did this solely out of vain-glory. And John shews this, when he says, 'Neither did his brethren believe on him;' and he records some words of theirs, full of great folly, when he tells us that they took him to Jerusalem, not for any other purpose, but that they might themselves derive glory for his miracles. 'If thou do these things,' said they, 'shew thyself to the world, for no one doeth any thing in secret, and seeketh

* 'Απόνοια, vesana quædam insolentia et animi elatio.—Steph. Thes. The Oxford "Library of the Fathers" renders the word "self-confidence." The Benedictines translate it "*arrogantia.*"

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himself to be conspicuous;' at which time he rebuked them for this, reproving their carnal mind. For when the Jews reproached him, saying, 'Is not this the carpenter's son, whose father and mother we know; and his brethren, are they not among us?' they, wishing to get rid of the charge from the meanness of his origin, excited him to a display of miracles. He therefore gives them a repulse, wishing to heal their malady; since, had he desired to deny his mother, he would surely then have denied her, when they cast this reproach. On the contrary, he shews himself to have entertained so great care for her, that on the very cross he entrusts her to the disciple who was his best beloved of all, and leaves many kind injunctions concerning her. But he does not so now, and that because of his care for her and his brethren; for since they approached him as a mere man, and were puffed with vain-glory, he expels that disease, not by insulting them, but by correcting them. . . . He did not wish to excite doubts in the mind, but to remove the most tyrannical of passions, and by little and little to lead to a correct estimate of himself, and to persuade her that he was not only her son, but her sovereign Lord. You will thus see that the rebuke was eminently becoming in him, and profitable to her, and withal containing much of mildness. He did not say, 'Go, tell the mother she is not my mother;' but he answered him who brought the message thus, 'Who is my mother?' together with what has been already said; effecting another object,—that neither should they nor any others, trusting to their connexions, neglect virtue. For if it profited her nothing to be his mother, unless that qualification were present, scarcely will any one else be saved in consequence of his relationship. There

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is only one nobility of birth,—the doing the will of God. This is a kind of good birth far better and nobler than the other."

In the next section, too long to transcribe here though its paragraphs contain many sentiments all leading to the same point, we read these expressions: "When a woman said, 'Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked,' he does not say 'Her womb did not bear me, I sucked not her paps;' but this, 'Yea, rather blessed are they who do the will of my Father.' You see how everywhere he does not deny the relationship of nature, but he adds that of virtue." "The same object he is effecting here," (as in his remonstrance with the Jews as children of Abraham,) "but less severely, and with more gentleness; for his speech related to his mother. He did not say, 'She is not my mother, they are not my brethren, because they do not the will of my Father.' He did not pass his sentence, and condemn them; but left them the option, speaking with a considerateness which became him, 'He that doeth the will of my Father, he is my brother, and sister, and mother; so that, if they wish to be such, let them enter upon this path.' And when the woman cried out, 'Blessed is the womb that bare thee,' he says not, 'She is not my mother;' but, 'If she wishes to be blessed, let her do the will of my Father; for such a one is my brother, and sister, and mother.' Oh, how great an honour! how great is virtue! To what an exalted eminence does it carry one who embraces it! How many women have called that holy Virgin and her womb blessed, and have longed to be such mothers, and to give up every thing besides! What is there to hinder them? For behold, he has cut out for us a broad way, and it is in the

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power, not of women only, but of men also, to be placed in such a rank as that,—rather in a much higher one; for this far more constitutes one his mother, than did those labour-pangs. So that if that is a cause for calling another blessed, much more is this, in as much as it is paramount. Do not then merely desire, but also with much diligence walk along the path which leads to the object of your desire. Having said this, he went out of the house. See you how he both rebuked them, and also did what they desired. The same thing also he did at the marriage; for there too he rebuked her when she unseasonably applied to him, and yet did not refuse; by the first act correcting her weakness, by the second shewing his good-will towards his mother. So here also he both healed the disease of vain-glory, and yet rendered becoming honour to his mother, although she was preferring an unseasonable request."

Thus is the testimony of St. Chrysostom beyond controversy conclusive against the present doctrine of the Church of Rome as to the worship of the Virgin Mary, and against the practice in his day of placing any religious trust in her merits, intercession, and advocacy. And this brings us within the commencement of the fifth century.

SECTION III.—JOHN CASSIAN, A.D. 500.*

John Cassian, who was at first one of Chrysostom's deacons, afterwards removing to Gaul, was ordained priest at Marseilles. He composed many theological dissertations in Latin, in which he writes at much length on the duty of prayer, and on the objects and subjects of a Christian's prayer; but he speaks only of

* Leipsic, 1733.

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prayer to God, without any allusion to the present influence or advocacy of the Virgin, or of any invocation of her to be made by Christians.*

In his treatise on the Incarnation of Christ,† he argues against those who would call Mary Christotocos—mother of Christ, and not Theotocos—mother of God; but he speaks not of any worship due to her on that account. His mind was fixed upon the union of the divine and human nature in Him who was Son of God and Man.

* Collat. ix. † De Incarn. lib. ii. c. 2.

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CHAPTER II.

SECTION I.—AUGUSTINE.*

ST. AUGUSTINE, Bishop of Hippo, in Africa, was born about A.D. 354, and died at an advanced age in the year 430, the very year of the Council of Ephesus, to which he was summoned.

When we recollect how rapidly Pagan superstitions invaded the integrity and purity of primitive worship after the conversion of Constantine, and how much the influence of many unhallowed innovations had mingled itself with the spirit of Christianity (like a little leaven leavening the whole lump) when Augustine was first initiated into the mysteries of our holy religion, our surprise may be great that his works, full and noble monuments of Gospel truth, present so few stains of an unscriptural and unprimitive character. We cannot, indeed, appeal to him as one who, when he was compelled to walk in the midst of the furnace, yet felt no hurt, and on whose garments the smell of fire had not passed. This would have required an interposition of the Most High no less miraculous than that which preserved the three faithful martyrs in the furnace of Babylon. But whilst some points even in Augustine—indications of fallible man—warn us with voices strong and clear to look for our rule of faith only to the inspired and written word of God,

* Paris, 1700.

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to which he himself most constantly appealed, we have cause for thankfulness that the great Head of the Church raised up at that season this burning and shining light; who, as the servant of the Holy Spirit, yet still only as a fallible and an erring brother, will continue to enlighten, and guide, and support the children of the Church of Christ whilst sacred literature has a place on earth.

Augustine found a large proportion of the Christian world leaning decidedly to superstition, and encouraging the substitution of human learning and of a degenerate philosophy for the simplicity of the Gospel. From time to time, as occasion offered, he recalled his fellow-believers from those superstitions to which converts still clung when they professed to resign Paganism for Christianity; and he discountenanced those subtle disquisitions, which flattered the pride of our nature, but were little in accordance with the truth as it is in Jesus. He found many substituting the angels and martyrs, of whom they heard in Christian churches and read in Christian books, for the gods many, and lords many, whom their fathers had served; and some of his most powerful and eloquent compositions are directed to the counteraction of that evil. But he did not so vigorously as he might have done set about the utter eradication of the growing bane; and sometimes, in the unrestrained flow of his eloquence, he would himself address the subject of his eulogy in such a manner as to supply arguments from his example for the very practices which he disowned. The principle on which he professed to act in the case of unauthorized novelties in Christian worship seems, to a certain extent at least, to have guided him generally: "Approve of these things I cannot;

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to reprove them more freely, I dare not."* Still, his pure and exalted sentiments on the subject of religious worship must have materially tended, within the sphere of their influence, to withdraw men's minds from all other objects of invocation, and to fix them on the one only Supreme God;† as also to withdraw them from all other mediators and intercessors, and to fix their hopes on the mediation and intercession of Christ Jesus our Lord, alone. It may be safe and interesting, before we proceed to the immediate subject of our present inquiry, to recall to our minds one or two passages which seem to have this tendency.

In his book on True Religion, he thus speaks:

"Let not our religion be the worship of dead men, because, if they lived piously, they are not so disposed as to seek such honours; but they wish HIM to be worshipped by us, who enlightening them, they rejoice that we are deemed worthy of being made partakers

* Vol. ii. p. 142; Epist. ad Januarium, lv. s. 35.

† It cannot be necessary to refer to those works, formerly ascribed to Augustine, which are acknowledged by the best Roman Catholic critics to be utterly spurious; such, for example, as the Book of Meditations, in which prayer is offered to God through the intercession of Mary, and prayer is addressed to Mary herself. It is lamentable to find that some Roman Catholic writers are so forgetful of the principles of truth, which should guide us all, as even in the present day to quote passages from such works as evidence of Augustine's faith. See Kirk and Berrington, p. 445. That these are spurious works, see the Benedictine editor's admonition, Appendix to vol. vi. p. 103.

In the quotation above referred to as made by Kirk and Berrington, it is painful to observe, that, whereas they quote in other cases from the Benedictine edition which pronounces this quotation to be a forgery, they here refer to the Paris edition of 1586, without even alluding to any doubt as to the testimony being genuine.

‡ Vol. i. p. 786.

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with them; they are to be honoured then on the ground of imitation, not to be adored on the ground of religion; and if they lived ill, wherever they be, they must not be worshipped.

"That object which the highest angels worship, is to be also worshipped by the lowest man; because the very nature of man becomes the lowest by not worshipping that object. For angels and men have not different sources of wisdom and truth, but both derive what they possess from one unchangeable wisdom and truth; for this very thing was done for our salvation in the dispensation of time, that the very excellence of God, and the wisdom of God, unchangeable, and consubstantial with the Father and coeternal, should vouchsafe to take upon himself human nature, through which he might teach us that the object to be worshipped by men is to be worshipped by every intelligent and rational creature. This also we may believe, that the most perfect angels themselves, and the most excellent servants of God, wish that we with themselves should worship God, in the contemplation of whom they are blessed. For neither are we blessed by seeing an angel, but by seeing the truth; by which also we love the angels, and rejoice with them. Nor are we envious because they enjoy it (the truth) more readily, or without any annoyances to interrupt them; but we love them the more, because we are commanded to hope for some such blessing from our common Lord. Therefore we honour them with love, not with service. Nor do we build temples to them; for they are unwilling so to be honoured by us, because they know that, when we are good, we are ourselves as temples of the most high God. Well therefore it is written, that a man was forbidden by an angel to adore

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him; but [he must adore] that one Lord under whom he also would be his fellow-servant.

"Behold, I worship one God—the one principle of all things, and the Wisdom by which whatever soul is wise is wise, and that gift by which whatever is blessed is blessed. Whichever of the angels loves this God, I am sure he loves me; whoever abides in Him, and can be sensible of human prayer, in Him he hears me; whoever regards Him as his good, in Him he assists me; nor can he be envious of my participation of Him. Let the adorers or the adulators of parts of the universe tell me what good being does not that man conciliate to himself who worships that one object which every good being loves, in the knowledge of whom he rejoices, and by having recourse to whom, as his principle, he becomes good."

Nor do we think it possible to conceive that St. Augustine looked to any other mediation or intercession than Christ's only. His comment on the words of St. John he could never surely have left without any modification or explanation, had he been accustomed to pray to God, trusting in the mediation of the Virgin Mary, or of any other than the Lord Jesus alone:

"'We have an advocate with the Father.' Ye see John himself preserving humility. Certainly he was a righteous and great man, who drank from the bosom of the Lord mysterious secrets; he who, imbibing from the breast of the Lord divine truth, uttered, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God.' He being such a man said not, 'YE have an advocate with the Father;' but, 'If any man sin, WE have an advocate.' He says not, 'YE have,' nor 'Ye have ME,' nor does he say, 'YE have Christ himself;' but as he puts 'Christ,' not 'himself,' so does he say,

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'WE have,' not 'YE have.' He had rather put himself in the number of sinners, that he might have Christ for his advocate, than put himself as an advocate in Christ's stead, and be found among the proud who must be condemned. My brethren, we have Jesus Christ himself our advocate with the Father—he is the propitiation for our sins. . . .' But some one will say, 'What then, do not holy ones' [sancti] 'pray for us? What then, do not the bishops and chiefs pray for the people?' Nay, attend to the Scripture, and see that the chiefs even commend themselves to the people; for the Apostle says to the people, 'Praying at the same time for us also.' The Apostle prays for the people, the people pray for the Apostle. We pray for you, brethren, but pray ye also for us. Let all the members pray mutually for each other, and the Head intercede for all." *

This subject seems to have strongly and deeply impressed itself on St. Augustine's mind; for we find him again, in his refutation of Parmenianus, with reference to the same passage of St. John, thus expressing himself, in words which, were they written by a modern divine, would be considered as directed expressly against the present errors of Rome:

"John says, 'I write this, that ye sin not.' If it should thus have followed, and he had said, 'If any one sin, YE have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for YOUR sins,' he might seem, as it were, to have separated himself from sinners, so that he might no longer have had need of the propitiation which is made by the Mediator sitting at the right hand of the Father, and interceding for us. This truly he would have said, not only proudly,

* Vol. iii. part 2. p. 831.

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but also falsely. But had he thus said, 'This have I written to you, that ye sin not; and, if any man sin, ye have ME for a mediator with the Father, and I pray pardon for your sins, (as Parmenianus in a certain place puts the bishop as a mediator between the people and God,) who of good and faithful Christians would endure him? Who would regard him as an Apostle of Christ, and not as Antichrist? . . . All Christian men mutually commend themselves to each other's prayers. But he for whom no one intercedes, whilst he intercedes for all, is the one and the true Mediator, of whom the type prefigured in the Old Testament is the priest; and no one is there found to have prayed for the priest. But Paul, though under the Head an especial member, yet because he was a member of Christ, and knew that the great and true High-priest had not by a figure entered within the veil into the holy of holies, but by express and real truth had for us entered within heaven to no imaginary, but to an eternal holiness,—he also commends himself to the prayers of the Church: he makes not himself a mediator between God and the people, but he asks that all the members of Christ's body would pray mutually for each other. Since the members are mutually anxious for each other, and, if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; and, if one member be glorified, all the members rejoice with it; thus let the mutual prayers of all the members yet toiling on the earth ascend to the Head, who is gone before us into heaven, in whom is the propitiation for our sins. For were Paul a mediator, so would his fellow-Apostles be mediators, and thus would there be many mediators; and Paul's reasoning would be inconsistent with himself, by which he said, 'There

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is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.'"*

These are by no means solitary passages: the works of St. Augustine breathe the same spirit throughout. We need not, however, be detained by a reference to more than one other passage. In his Confessions:† "Whom could I find who could reconcile me to thee? Was I to betake myself to the angels?—With what prayer? By what sacraments? . . . The Mediator between God and man must have somewhat of the likeness of God, and somewhat of the likeness of man; lest, being in both cases like man, he might be far from God; or, being in both like God, he might be far from man, and so would not be a mediator. . . . The true Mediator, whom by thy secret mercy thou hast shewn to the humble, and whom thou hast sent, that by his example they might learn humility, that Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, appeared between sinful mortals and the righteous and immortal One. . . . How didst thou love us, O good Father, who sparedst not thine only Son, but didst deliver him for us ungodly men! Deservedly is my hope strong in this, that thou wilt heal all my infirmities by Him who sitteth at thy right hand and intercedes with thee for us; otherwise I should despair."

Is it possible to conceive that this holy man, when he presented his prayers to the blessed and eternal Trinity, carried with him in his heart, or on his tongue, the advocacy or intercession of any being, angel, saint, or Virgin, save only the eternal Son of God and man?

* Vol. ix. p. 34. † Vol. i. pp. 193, 194.

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SECTION II.

But we must now inquire specifically what were St. Augustine's sentiments and belief and practice with regard to the Virgin Mary, the adoration of her, and faith in her merits and intercession. To the question, What is Augustine's testimony? the only answer which can fairly be made is this, That, from the first to the last page of his voluminous works, there is not a single expression which would lead us to suppose that he ever invoked her himself, or was aware of her invocation forming any part of the worship of his fellow-Christians, either in their public assemblies or their private devotions; nor is there a single expression which would induce us to believe that Augustine looked to her for any aid, spiritual or temporal, or placed any confidence whatever in her mediation or intercession. On the contrary, there is accumulated and convincing proof that he knew nothing of her worship, let it be called dulia or hyperdulia; that he knew nothing of her immaculate Conception, of her Assumption into heaven,* or of festivals instituted to her honour; in a word, that, though he maintains strong opinions on some points left open by our Church, his belief and sentiments corresponded in all essential points with the belief and sentiments of the Church of England, and were utterly inconsistent with the present belief and practice of the Church of Rome.

Many of the spurious works ascribed to St. Augustine contain passages strongly impregnated with er-

* In another part of this work we refer to the passage (Vol. ix. p. 116) usually quoted to prove that the feast of the Annunciation was observed in the Church in the time of Augustine, and shew the fallacy of the argument.

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rors, which had their origin in an age long after he was taken to his rest; and such spurious works are still quoted, without any intimation of their doubtful or supposititious character. Thus, in a work called "The Manual of Devotion, by Ambrose Lisle Phillipps, Esq., of Grace-Dieu Manor," (Derby, 1843,) p. 98, the author says, "The ancient Fathers of the early Church give us full warrant to apply to the blessed Virgin all the passages of Scripture which may also be applied to the Church. Thus, the glorious St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, in the third discourse to the catechumens on the Creed, applies the vision of St. John the Evangelist in the 12th chapter of the Apocalypse, where he sees a woman clothed with the sun, and a crown of twelve stars on her head, as referring to our blessed Lady.—Vol. vi. Paris, 1837, p. 965."

It is astonishing to find this sermon thus quoted as St. Augustine's, when, in the very volume in which it is found, the editor prefaces the sermons, of which this is the third, with such a heading as this (p. 930): "Here follow three other sermons on the Creed, which by no means present to us Augustine, to whom hitherto in former editions they have been ascribed, but an orator far his inferior in the character of his speaking, in learning, and in talent."*

St. Augustine is not one of those who, either from the scantiness of his remains, or the nature of his works, might leave us in doubt as to his sentiments: he is led in very many of his works to speak of the

* From the third of these Mr. Phillipps quotes the above passage, as though it were acknowledged to be St. Augustine's, without any allusion to its condemnation as a spurious work in the very edition to which he refers.

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Virgin Mary, her nature, her office, and her character, both directly and incidentally. On two subjects, of especial interest to him, to which he is constantly and fully reverting, he is led to speak of her in every variety of light: the one subject is the Incarnation of the Son of God, the other is the institution of the life of Virginity by professed and devoted virgins; a life which, he says, originally derived its dignity from her.* St. Augustine, then, strongly maintains that Mary was a devoted virgin before the Angel's salutation, and that so she remained through her whole life to her death, never having lived with Joseph as her husband; and that those who are called his brethren were relatives of Mary. He considers Mary a bright example of religious and moral excellence, especially to those who devoted themselves to a virgin life; nay, FOR THE HONOUR OF OUR LORD, he wishes no question to be ever entertained as to sinfulness in Mary.† In making a spiritual and typical application of the words in Genesis, "that a mist," or, as he calls it, a fountain, "sprang up, and watered the whole face of the earth;" having stated that by the face was meant the dignity of the earth, he says, that the fountain represented the Holy Spirit, the garden the will of God, the man to till it was Christ, and the face of the earth was Mary, of whom it was said "The

* Vol. v. p. 296.

† Vol. x. p. 144. "Except therefore the holy Virgin Mary, concerning whom, for the honour of the Lord, I wish not any question at all to be discussed when the subject is on sins; for how can we tell whether a greater portion of grace were not given to her to enable her to conquer sin altogether, who was thought worthy to conceive and bring forth Him who it is certain had no sin? Except this Virgin only, if we could collect all the holy men and holy women who ever lived here, would they not confess, 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves?'"

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Holy Spirit shall overshadow thee." He says, that, with Elizabeth and Anna, she was one of the few recorded in the New Testament as having prophesied.* He says that her question, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" did not imply a want of faith in her, but only a desire to know what would be God's good pleasure; and he contrasts this question of Mary with the question of Zacharias,† which, though the same in sound, was, he says, far different in spirit. He says that she conceived Christ in her soul by faith, before she conceived him in her womb. He calls her the Virgin Mary, the holy Mary;‡ a virgin when she conceived, when she brought forth, when she died; the mother of the Lord. But he never uses the term Mother of God.

He speaks of Mary dying,§ but he alludes not to her Assumption. He speaks of the Conception‖ of her by her father and mother, but he expressly says she was herself conceived and born in sin; though she herself conceived without spot or stain of sin, and gave birth to the sinless Saviour. Instead of representing Mary as the Bride and Spouse of the Almighty, (a title now, alas! too commonly applied to her by our Roman Catholic brethren,) Augustine represents her as the chamber only,¶ in which the Divine Word was as a Bridegroom united with his human nature as his bride. He considers the tradition which represents Mary as having been the daughter of Joachim, of the tribe of Levi, as drawn from an apocryphal source by Faustus;** and if he were induced to regard Joachim as her father

* Vol. vii. p. 488.
† Vol. v. p. 1167.
‡ Vol. v. p. 251.
§ Vol. vi. p. 289.
‖ Vol. iv. p. 241; and Vol. x. p. 654; and Vol. iii. part i. p. 268.
¶ Vol. iii. part ii. p. 354.
** Vol. viii. p. 427.

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at all, he would consider him as not appertaining to the sacerdotal tribe of Levi, but the regal tribe of Judah.

He tells us that Angels adore the flesh of Christ * sitting at the right hand of the Father; but for any rejoicing of the Angels on Mary's admission to heaven, such as the Roman service on the day of her Assumption asserts, we look in Augustine's works in vain.

SECTION III.

But it will be more satisfactory to quote at length some passages which seem to embody his sentiments on the subject of our inquiry: many such there are, edifying and interesting in themselves, as well as valuable testimonies to the point at issue. The question will repeatedly force itself on the reader of St. Augustine, Could this writer have suppliantly invoked Mary? Could he have hoped for acceptance with God through her intercession? Could he have relied on her merits and intercession? If, for example, we examine his treatise on the 12th verse of the 2nd chapter of St. John, "After this He went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples," we read these sentiments:† "You will find that all the relatives of Mary are brethren of Christ. But the disciples were still more his brethren, for even those relatives would not have been his brethren had they not been his disciples; and without cause would they have been his brethren, had they not acknowledged their brother for their master. For in a certain place, when his mother and his brethren were announced to him as standing without, and he was speaking with his

* Vol. v. p. 970. † Vol. iii. part ii. p. 369.

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disciples, he said, 'Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?' and stretching forth his hand to his disciples he said, 'These are my brethren; and whosoever will do the will of my Father, he is my mother, and brother, and sister.' Therefore was also Mary, because she did the will of the Father. In her the Lord magnified this, that she did the will of the Father, not that flesh gave birth to flesh. Attend to this, my dear friends. Wherefore, when the Lord seemed the object of admiration in a crowd, working signs and wonders, and shewing what was hidden in his flesh, some souls admiring him said, 'Happy the womb that bare thee!' and he answered, 'Yea, happy are they who hear the word of God and keep it.' This is to say, Even my mother, whom you call happy, is therefore happy because she keeps the word of God, not because in her the Word was made flesh, and dwelt in us; but because she keeps the Word of God, by which she was made, and because it was made flesh in her. Let not men rejoice in their temporal offspring; let them leap for joy if they are in Spirit joined to God."

Thus, too, at the commencement of his book on Holy Virginhood, he comments on the same passage:* "What else does he teach us but to prefer our spiritual family to our carnal relationship? and that men are not blessed because they are joined to just and holy men by kindred, but if they are united with them by obeying and imitating their instructions and moral character. Consequently Mary was more blessed by receiving the faith of Christ, than by conceiving the flesh of Christ..... Finally, what did their relationship profit his brethren,—that is, his relatives according to the flesh,—who did not

* Vol. vi. p. 342.

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believe in him? So also the near relationship of a mother would have profited Mary nothing, unless she had carried Christ more happily in her heart than in the flesh..... He, the offspring of one holy virgin is the ornament of all holy virgins; and they together with Mary are mothers of Christ, if they do his Father's will: hence also Mary is in a more praiseworthy and blessed manner the mother of Christ. He spiritually exhibits all these relationships in the people whom he has redeemed; he regards as his brothers and sisters holy men and holy women, because they are joint-heirs in the heavenly inheritance. The whole Church is his mother, because she truly bears by the grace of God his members, that is, his faithful ones. So likewise every pious soul is his mother, doing the will of his Father with most fruitful love, in those whom she brings forth, until He be formed in them. Mary, therefore, doing the will of God is bodily only the mother of Christ, but spiritually his mother and his sister." *

In his comment on our Lord's address to his mother at the marriage-feast, Augustine deems it necessary to refute the false inferences of two very opposite classes of men: first, those who maintained from the words "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" that Mary was not the mother of the Lord Jesus; and, secondly, those fatalists (mathematicians, as he calls them), who alleged his last words, "Mine hour is not yet come," in proof that our Saviour was under the necessity of destiny. In his refutation of the latter error, we find nothing which needs to be quoted here. In his answer to the former misbelievers, St. Augustine's words may help us in forming a correct view of the habitual

* Vol. vi. p. 343.

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sentiments entertained by him of Mary and of her office and character.

"The Lord when invited came to a marriage.* What marvel that he should go into that house to a marriage, who came into this world for a marriage? For, had he not come to a marriage, he would not have had a bride. He has a bride whom he redeemed by his blood, and to whom he gave the Holy Spirit as a pledge. He rescued her from the thraldom of the devil; he died for her transgressions; he rose again for her justification. Who will offer so much to his bride? Let men offer any adorning presents of the earth, gold, silver, precious stones, horses, slaves, fields and farms; will any one offer his own blood? .... But the Lord, secure in his death, gave his own blood for her, whom at his resurrection he might have, whom he had already united to himself in the Virgin's womb. For the WORD is the bridegroom, and his human flesh is the bride; and both are one Son of God, and the same the Son of man. When he was made the head of the Church, that womb of the Virgin Mary was the bridechamber: then he went out as a bridegroom out of his chamber. As the Scripture saith, 'He went as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoiced as a giant to run his course',— he went from his chamber as a bridegroom, and being invited he came to a marriage.† For some undoubted mystery, he seems not to acknowledge the mother from whom he proceeded as a bridegroom.‡ ..... Why then does the Son say to the mother, 'What have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come?' Our Lord Jesus Christ was both God and man; in that he was God, he had no mother; in that he was man, he had. She, therefore, was the mother of his flesh, the mother of his humanity, the mother of

* Vol. iii. pt. ii. p. 354. † P. 355. ‡ P. 357.

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the infirmity which he took upon him for our sakes. But the miracle which he was about to perform, he was about to perform according to his divinity, not according to his infirmity; in that he was God, not in that he was born a weak man. But the weakness of God is stronger than man. His mother required him to perform a miracle, but he, as it were, does not acknowledge his human origin * when about to effect a divine work; as though he said, 'That part of me which works the miracle, thou didst not give birth to. It was not thou that gavest birth to my divinity: but, because thou gavest birth to my infirmity, I will then acknowledge thee when that infirmity shall hang upon the cross.' For this is the meaning of 'Mine hour is not yet come.' For then he acknowledged her, who had truly always known her. And, before he was born of her, he had known her in predestination; and before he, as God, created her of whom he as man was created, he had known his mother: but at a certain hour, in a mystery, he does not acknowledge her; and at a certain hour, in mystery, he again acknowledges her. He then acknowledged her when that to which she gave birth was dying: for that was not dying by which Mary was made, but that was dying which was formed from Mary; the eternity of the Godhead died not, but the infirmity of the flesh died. He consequently makes this answer, distinguishing in the faith of the disciples who it was that came, and by what way; for he came by his mother a woman, the God and Lord of heaven and earth. In that he was the Lord of the world, of the earth, and the heaven, he was Lord also of Mary; in that he was the Creator of the heaven and the earth, he was

* Viscera humana non agnoscit.

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the Creator also of Mary: but according to what is said, 'Made of a woman, made under the Law,' he was the son of Mary; himself the Lord of Mary and the Son of Mary, the Creator of Mary and himself created from Mary. Marvel not that he is both Son and Lord; for as of Mary, so also of David, is he called the Son; and of David is he therefore the Son, because he is the Son of Mary. In the same manner, then, as he is both the Son and Lord of David,— the Son of David according to the flesh, the Son of God according to his divinity; so is he the Son of Mary according to the flesh, and the Lord of Mary according to his majesty. Therefore, because she was not the mother of his divinity, and it was by his divinity that the miracle was about to be performed, he answered 'What have I to do with thee?' But do not think that I shall deny thee as my mother; for then I will acknowledge thee when the weakness of which thou art the mother shall begin to hang upon the cross.' Let us test the truth of this. When the Lord suffered, (as the same Evangelist says, who had known the mother of the Lord, and who even at this marriage-feast introduced the mother of the Lord to us,) himself relates, 'there was about the cross the mother of Jesus; and Jesus said to his mother, 'Woman, behold thy Son,' and to the disciple, 'Behold thy mother.' He commends his mother to his disciple; he who was about to die before his mother, and to rise again before his mother's death, commends his mother; —as a human being, he commends to a human being a human being. This had Mary brought forth. That hour was then already come of which at that time he had spoken, 'Mine hour is not yet come.'"

We cannot but observe an essential difference,

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constantly forcing itself upon our notice, between the manner in which St. Augustine employs the fundamental truth, that the Son of God was born the Son of man of the Virgin-mother of her substance, and the turn generally given to it by Roman Catholic writers. They employ the truth to exalt Mary, and draw our minds to a contemplation of her exalted nature, and excite our praise towards her: Augustine, to fix our thoughts on the atonement, to excite in us a lively faith in Him alone, and to fill our hearts with thanksgiving and praise. He is ever drawing away our minds from the means to the end, and from the instrument to the eternal agent,—from Mary to God. Thus: "Mary believed, and what she believed was effected in her. Let us believe, also, that what was effected may be profitable to us also."* Then, again, in a sermon on the Nativity:† "Therefore, that Day, even the Word of God, the Day which shineth on angels, the Day which shineth in that country whence we are sojourners, clothed himself with flesh, and is born of a Virgin.... We were mortals, we were oppressed by our sins, we were bearing our own punishment.... Christ is born—let no one doubt to be born again; let His mercy be poured in our hearts. His mother bare him in her womb—let us also bear him in our heart. The Virgin was filled by the incarnation of Christ—let our hearts be filled by faith of Christ. The Virgin brought forth the Saviour—let our soul bring forth salvation, let us also bring forth praise. Let us not be barren, let our souls be fruitful to God."

Thus, again, in the discourse, an object of which is to reconcile the genealogies of St. Matthew and St. Luke, St. Augustine speaks on Mary's modesty, not

* Vol. v. p. 951. † Vol. v. p. 890.

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with the view of exalting her, but, as he expressly tells us, to train up other women in the same principles.

"In the first place, brethren, and chiefly for the discipline of women, our sisters, so holy a modesty of the Virgin Mary must not be passed by. She had given birth to Christ; an angel had come to her, and said, 'Behold, thou shalt conceive and bear a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the most High.' She had been thought worthy to give birth to the Son of the Highest, and she was most humble; nor did she prefer herself to her husband, not even in the order of naming themselves, so as to say, 'I and thy father;' but she says, 'Thy father and I.' She thinks not of the dignity of her womb, but of conjugal order; for the lowly Christ would not have taught his mother to be proud. 'Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.' She says, 'Thy father and I,' because the man is the head of the woman. How much less ought other women to be proud?"*

But so many instances of this habitual reference from Mary to God, from her office as mother to our duty as Christ's members, present themselves throughout the works of St. Augustine, that the difficulty is, not to find, but to choose; not to gather, but to select from what we have gathered: and on this immediate point we will only add one more specimen. It is from a sermon on the Nativity.

"Deservedly, then, did the prophets announce that he should be born; and the heavens and angels, that he was born. He lay in a manger, who held the world; He was an infant, and the Word. Him, whom the

* Vol. v. p. 291.

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heavens do not contain, the bosom of one woman bare. She ruled our Ruler; she carried Him, in whom we are: she gave suck to our Bread: O manifested weakness, and wondrous humility, in which the whole Divinity thus lay hid! The mother to whom in his infancy He was subject, He ruled by his power; and her, whose breasts He sucked, He fed with truth. May He perfect his gifts in us, who did not abhor to take on himself our origin! may He himself make us the sons of God, who for our sakes willed to become Son of man!"*

SECTION IV.

We have dwelt already so long upon the sentiments of St. Augustine, that we need not be detained further on this branch of our evidence; but we cannot anticipate the regret of any one at our closing with another passage, in itself most animating and uplifting to the Christian, and at the same time, though not so fully and in detail as other parts of his works, yet virtually presenting to us the habitual sentiments of the great master of the Christian Israel, whose testimony we have been examining, on the nature of Angels, and on the part to which the Virgin Mary was called in the work of our redemption. The following are his remarks on the words of the 149th Psalm, "He hath made them fast for ever and ever. He hath given them a precept which shall not be broken."† "All heavenly things, all things above, all powers and angels, a city on high, good, holy, blessed; from which because we are wanderers, we are yet miserable; and whither because we are about to return, we are blessed

* Vol. v. p. 882. † Vol. iv. p. 1676.

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in hope; and whither when we shall have returned, we shall be blessed in deed. What precept do you think the heavenly beings and holy angels have? What precept did God give to them? What, except to praise him? Blessed are they whose business it is to praise God. They plough not, they sow not, they grind not, they dress not food; for these are works of necessity, and no necessity is there. They steal not, they plunder not, they commit not adultery; for these are works of iniquity, and no iniquity is there. They break not bread to the hungry, they clothe not the naked, the stranger they take not in, they visit not the sick, they reconcile not the contentious, they bury not the dead; these are works of mercy, and no misery on which mercy might be shewn is there. O blessed ones! Do we think we shall be thus? Ah! let us sigh for it, and from a sigh let us groan. And what are we that we might be there? Mortals, cast forth, cast away,—earth and ashes. But He who promised is omnipotent. If we look to ourselves, what are we? If we look to Him, He is God, He is omnipotent. Will not He make an angel of a man, who made man of nothing? Or would God esteem man for nought, for whom he was willing that his only Son should die? Let us look to the proof of his love. We have received such an earnest of God's promise. We hold fast the death of Christ; we hold fast the blood of Christ. Who died? The only One. For whom did he die? We might have wished it had been for the good—for the just! But what? Christ, says the Apostle, died for the ungodly. He who gave his own death for the ungodly, what does he preserve for the righteous but his own life? Let then human weakness lift itself; let it not despair, nor crush itself, nor turn itself away, nor say, 'I

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shall not be.' He who promised is God, and he came that he might promise; he appeared to man, he came to take upon himself our death, to promise his life. He came to the country of our sojourn to receive here what here abounds,—reproaches, scourging, smiting on the cheek, spittings in the face, revilings, a crown of thorns, hanging on the tree, the cross, death.... These things abound in our country, and to such treatment he came. What did he give here? What did he receive here? He gave exhortation, he gave doctrine, he gave remission of sins: he received reproaches, the cross, and death. He brought from that country good things to us, and in our country he endured evils. Yet he promised us that we should be there, whence he came; and he says, 'Father, I will that where I am, there may they also be.' So great love went before. Because, where we were, he was with us; where he is, we shall be with him. O mortal man! what hath God promised thee? That thou shalt live for ever. Thou dost not believe! Believe, believe! What he hath done already is more than what he has promised. What has he done? He has died for thee. What has he promised? That thou shalt live with Him. It is harder to believe that the Eternal One died, than that a mortal should live for ever. We have that already which it is the harder to believe. If for man's sake God died, shall not man live with God? Shall not a mortal live for ever, for whose sake He who is eternal died? But how did God die? and whence did God die? and can God die? He took FROM THEE that whence he might die for thee. He could not die, except as flesh; he could not die, except as a mortal body. He clothes himself where he might die for thee; he will clothe thee where thou mayest live with him. Where

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did he clothe himself with death? In the Virginity of his Mother. Where will he clothe thee with life? In the equality of his Father. Here he chose for himself a CHASTE CHAMBER, where he might be united, a bridegroom, with HIS BRIDE. The Word was made flesh, that he might be the Head of the Church. For the Word Himself is not part of the Church; but took upon himself flesh that he might be the Head of the Church. Somewhat of ours is already above, namely, what he received here, where he died and was crucified. Already have certain first-fruits of thine gone before, and dost thou doubt that thou shalt follow?"

The evidence of St. Augustine brings us into the second quarter of the fifth century.

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CHAPTER III.

SECTION I.—ST. JEROME, A. D. 418.*

In the estimation of Roman Catholic writers, the name of Jerome, "the greatest master of the Churches," stands among the highest, if not the very highest, of the early Fathers of the Christian Church. He was born in an obscure town, as his biographer assures us, he was nourished from his cradle with the pure milk of Catholic truth.† He was "the friend and the oracle of Pope Damasus, and was joined (as the Roman writers say,) in an indissoluble communion with the Roman See:" and, by the canon law of Rome, not only are his books received implicitly, but of the works of others, such as Ruffinus and Origen, those only are stamped with authority which "the blessed Jerome does not reject." Nay, in the Epistle Dedicatory to Clement XII. Jerome is declared to have been pronounced by the unanimous voice of Rome, to be worthy of the highest sacerdotal dignity, even the chair of Peter itself; but he preferred the silence and retirement of a hermit's life. It is impossible for any one engaged in an inquiry into the belief and practice of the primitive Church, whatever be the immediate subject of investigation, not to look with more than ordi-

* The references are made to the admirable Benedictine edition of Jerome, published at Verona, from 1734 to 1742, in 11 vols. fol.

† See his Life, vol. xi. p. 14.

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nary interest and anxiety to the sentiments of Jerome; and on the question before us we must attach still greater importance to his testimony, from the circumstance that the state and condition of the Virgin Mary, as the Mother of our Lord, repeatedly formed the subject both of his discussions with those whose opinions he controverted, and of his instruction to those who esteemed him as their teacher in Christian doctrine. And what is the character of that evidence? From the very first to the very last page of his voluminous works, embracing every variety of theological subjects, not one single expression occurs, we do not say, to warrant the conclusion that Jerome looked with faith to the intercession of the Virgin, or ever invoked her aid or her prayers; but which would even imply his knowledge that any dependence on her intercession, or any invocation of her aid, prevailed in any part of the Catholic Church in his day. His works have been most diligently searched, and ransacked, with the view of finding some countenance in them for those practices which we call the innovations and corruptions of later times. But the search is made in vain. The evidence of this celebrated Father is all one way, and is totally incompatible with the supposition that his belief and practice coincided with the belief and practice of the Church of Rome, as fixed by the Council of Trent, as enjoined and exemplified in her authorised formularies and rituals, and as exhibited in the devotional works of her most approved authors. Indeed, we cannot discover that any of the most laborious and zealous defenders of that hyperdulia which is now professedly paid to the Virgin, has cited a single passage from Jerome in its favour. And this is the more remarkable, because on some points, which many theo-

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logians have considered as open questions, he is more than usually energetic in maintaining the Virgin's dignity. For example, he strenuously asserts that she was never the wife of Joseph; that those who are called in the Gospel "Christ's brethren," were not her children; that to the day of her death she remained the same pure and immaculate Virgin as she was before the birth of the Saviour. In a letter to Pammachius, written with a view to defend himself against the charge of having, in his zeal for the state of virginhood, spoken disparagingly of marriage, he employs this language: "When anything in my work appears harsh to you, look not to my words, but to the Scripture, from which my words are taken. Christ is a Virgin; the Mother of our Virgin [masculine] is a perpetual Virgin; Holy Mary is Mother and Virgin—a Virgin after the birth, a mother before her nuptials.*

To those questions, which have since been pursued with far more of curiosity† and presumption than of humility and delicacy, we shall not allude. The Church of England, by keeping a solemn and pious silence on those mysteries in our blessed Lord's incarnation, has plainly indicated to her faithful children her mind and will that they should abstain from such bold and profitless speculations, and, practically applying the prin-

* Epist. 48 (otherwise 50), written probably A. D. 393; vol. i. p. 231.

† The Benedictine editor on Jerome's fourteenth Homily on St. Luke, (vol. vii. p. 289,) aware that Jerome's words were at variance with the opinions which have been sedulously propagated by Roman writers of comparatively recent dates, refers to one of these points with painful illustrations; points these, the discussion of which can in no way benefit either our head or our heart, and can neither increase our knowledge of Gospel verity, nor strengthen our faith in Christ. This editor includes Tertullian, Basil, Ambrose, and Athanasius in the same charge of error with Jerome.

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ciple of Jerome (which he sometimes seems to have himself forgotten), not to proceed a single step further in these subjects than the Scripture itself may seem to lead us by the hand.

Jerome repeatedly propounds Mary as an example to be followed by all virgins, but it is in words very far removed from the language of one who would address her by invocation.

Thus, in a letter written about the year A. D. 403,* to Læta, on the education of her daughter, he says, "Let her imitate Mary, whom Gabriel found alone in her chamber; and perhaps for this very reason was she terrified, because she beheld a man, whom she was not accustomed to see."

Thus too, in his epistle to Eustochium, written about twenty years before,† in which he says "Death came by Eve, and Life by Mary;" and in which he calls his correspondent the spouse of God, and bids her follow the example of Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who preferred Christ's doctrine to her food; after cautioning Eustochium not to follow the example of those who gave their minds to worldly affairs, he proceeds: "Let us follow the example of better persons. Propose to yourself the blessed Mary, who was of so great purity as to be thought worthy to be the mother of the Lord; who, when the angel Gabriel, in the form of a man, came down to her, saying, 'Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee,' being confounded and terrified, could not answer, for she had never been saluted by a man. At length she learned that he was a messenger, and speaks; and she who was afraid of a man, converses freely with an angel." And then so far from

* Epist. 107, p. 679. † Epist. 22, vol. i. p. 120.

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fixing the reader's mind on Mary, as though she were the chief subject of his thoughts, he assures his female correspondent, that by the same purity of mind and body she might herself also become the mother of the Saviour;* and, still withdrawing the mind from Mary, he exclaims, "The labour is great, but the prize is great, to be what the martyrs are, what the apostles are, what Christ is."

In another letter which he wrote about the year 405, to a mother and a daughter who were at variance, and whom he enjoins to be reconciled, he thus speaks:† "Mother and daughter, names of piety, words significant of duties, the bonds of nature, an alliance second after God! It is no praise if you love, it is wickedness that you hate. The Lord Jesus was subjected to his parents. He revered his mother, of whom he was himself the Father; he honoured his nourisher, the man whom he had nourished; and he remembered that he had been carried in the womb of one, and in the arms of the other. Whence also, when hanging on the cross, he commends to his disciple the parent whom, before the cross, he had never sent away."

Whilst Jerome, both in his comments on holy Scripture and in his treatise called Hebrew Questions,‡ applies some passages to the Virgin Mary, which most commentators, ancient and modern, interpret of Christ, he applies to the Saviour himself the celebrated passage in Genesis, which the Vulgate translates so as to apply it to Mary, "HE shall bruise thy head;" not, as the Vulgate renders it, "SHE shall bruise thy head;" adding, "Because our steps are hindered by the ser-

* Potes et tu esse Mater Domini.

† Epist. 117, vol. i. p. 777.

‡ Vol. ix. p. 28, and vol. iii. p. 309.

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pent, and the Lord shall bruise Satan under our feet speedily."

On the other hand, on Isaiah, xi. 1,* "A branch shall come out from the stem of Jesse, and a flower shall grow from his root," Jerome says, "The branch is the mother of our Lord, simple, pure, sincere, with no external germ, and, after the likeness of God, fruitful in herself alone. The flower of the branch is Christ, who says, 'I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valley;' who also in another place is spoken of as 'a stone cut from the mountain without hands;' the Prophet signifying that a virgin" [masculine] "should spring from a virgin."

In his translation of one of Origen's Homilies on St. Luke,† having stated that Elizabeth was not filled with the Holy Spirit till she had conceived John, he thus illustrates his meaning, by referring to what of a similar nature was known of the Saviour: "Mary was filled with the Holy Ghost then, when she began to hold the Saviour in her womb; for immediately that she received the Holy Spirit, the framer of our Lord's body, and that the Son of God began to be in her womb, herself also was filled with the Holy Ghost."

In his comment on Ezekiel, xliv. 1,‡ Jerome considers the closed gate to mean the Word of God, the knowledge of God, or Paradise; and, after giving his own view, he tells us that some beautifully interpreted it of the Virgin Mary, who before and after the nativity was a virgin.

In his prologue to Zephaniah, he says,§ "I say nothing of Anna and Elizabeth, and other holy women,

* Vol. i. p. 101, and vol. iv. p. 155.

† Hom. vii. vol. vii. p. 265.

‡ Vol. v. p. 535.

§ Vol. vi. p. 671.

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whose little fires (as of stars) the clear light of Mary hides." And, in another place, he represents the holiness of Zachariah and Elizabeth to be inferior to Mary's.*

He calls her a prophetess, the mother of the Saviour, the holy and blessed mother of the Lord; and he speaks of her who should give birth to God.†

"O house of David, marvel not at the novelty of the fact if a virgin shall bring forth God, Him who hath so great power, that though he will be born after a long time, yet now when called upon can set thee free; for He it is who appeared to Abraham, and talked with Moses."‡

He tells us that Mary was chid by our Lord as a woman; he calling her, as St. Paul does, not a virgin, but a woman: though St. Paul (he says) meant not to imply by that expression that she was a married woman. Jerome, in his comment on Jeremiah, c. xxxi. v. 22, "A woman shall compass a man," though he speaks of the Saviour's miraculous conception and birth of a woman, yet makes no mention of Mary.§

St. Jerome was the great encourager and patron of the virgin-life, and he is led throughout his works to refer to Mary again and again; but he speaks of her only as the Virgin-Mother of our Lord. Not one word escapes his pen implying his own dependence on her merits and intercession; not the most distant allusion is made to any invocation offered to her in his time, either by the assembled Church, or by individual Christians in their private devotions. No intimation is given to us of any festival

* Vol. ii. p. 230. † Vol. vii. pp. 504. 449.
‡ Com. on Isaiah, vii. 15; vol. iv. p. 111. § Vol. iv. 1069.

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instituted in her honour, of any churches dedicated to her name. He alludes not to her miraculous death, or to her assumption into heaven.

He speaks of prayer, but it is prayer only to God; he bids us not to take our food without prayer, never to retire from the table without thanksgiving, but it must be offered to the Creator.*

We will only quote two more passages; one, recording Jerome's sentiments on the object of religious worship;† and another, in which he speaks of Mary in a manner totally incompatible with such sentiments as our Roman Catholic brethren now entertain, as well as with the decree of the Council of Trent: "We worship not, nor adore, I do not say, the reliques of Martyrs, but neither the sun, nor the moon, nor angels nor archangels, nor cherubin nor seraphin, nor any name that is named in the present world or in the world to come, lest we serve the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. We honour the reliques of martyrs, that we may adore Him whose martyrs they are; we honour the servants, that the honour of the servants may redound to the Lord."

The Council of Trent declares that the Virgin Mary, by the special privilege of God, never was chargeable with any sin at all; and, consistently with the worship now offered to her, less could scarcely have been expected. But how did the ancient teachers of Christianity speak on this point? We have already seen how St. Basil contradicts this notion, in his interpretation of Simeon's prophecy to Mary; and how St. Chry-

* The words are too beautiful not to be quoted in the original. "Nec cibi sumantur, nisi oratione præmissâ; nec recedatur a mensâ, nisi referatur Creatori gratia."—Vol. i. p. 119.

† Epist. cix. vol. i. p. 720.

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sostom agrees with him:—the words of St. Jerome, in his translation of Origen's Homily upon the same Scripture, are these: *

"Simeon then says, 'And a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also.'† What is that sword which pierced through the hearts, not of others only, but also of Mary? It is plainly written, that in the time of the passion all the Apostles were offended; our Lord himself also saying, 'All ye shall be offended this night.' Therefore all of them together were offended; so much, that Peter also, the chief of the Apostles, denied him thrice. What! do we suppose, that, when the Apostles were offended, the mother of our Lord was free from the offence? If she felt not offence at the passion of the Lord, Jesus did not die for her sins. But if all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being justified by his grace, and redeemed, surely Mary also was offended at that time. And this is what Simeon now prophesies, 'Thine own soul also—thine who knowest that thou, a virgin, without a husband didst bring forth,—who didst hear from Gabriel, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee,'—shall the sword of unbelief pierce through; and thou shalt be struck with the point of the weapon of doubt, and thy thoughts shall tear and distract thee, when thou shalt see him whom thou hast heard to be the Son of God, and whom thou knowest to have been conceived without the seed of man, crucified and die, and be subject to human punish-

* Hom. xvii. in Luc., vol. vii. p. 300.

† See Basil and others, who take the same view which Jerome presents to us here, and are all included by the Benedictine editors in the charge of holding opinions contrary to the doctrines of the Church of Rome, and of the Council of Trent.

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ments, and at last lamenting with tears, and saying, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.'"

Again, on the passage "When the days of THEIR" [so he reads it, *eorum*] "purification were accomplished," he says, "The purification of what persons? If it had been written on account of HER purification, that is, Mary's, who had brought forth, no question would have arisen; and we should have confidently said, that Mary, who was a mortal, needed purification after parturition." *

Again, on the passage "And they understood not this saying," Jerome's words are, "Observe this also, that, as long as he was in the possession of his Father, he was above; because Joseph and Mary had not yet a full faith, therefore they could not remain above with him, but he is said to have gone down with them." †

Whether we regard these as the sentiments adopted by Jerome himself from Origen, or as Origen's translated by Jerome, and left without any note of disapprobation by him, it may be asked, Could these men have believed, as the modern Romanists believe, of the Virgin Mary? Is the faith of the Church of Rome, or of the Church of England, the faith of the primitive Fathers? The dissatisfaction evinced by the Benedictine editor at these "audacious accusations" ‡ of Mary (as he calls them) suggests the only answer.—The primitive Fathers of the Christian Church did not

* Hom. xiv. vol. vii. p. 285. † Hom. xx. vol. vii. p. 309.

‡ "So true is it," says the Benedictine editor, "that Adamantius was guilty of injustice towards the Holy Virgin." In the fourteenth homily, he says she needed purification; in the seventeenth homily, that she felt scandal and doubt as to her Son; now much more audaciously he accuses her of unbelief and little faith." The correctness of Origen or of Jerome's view is not the question before us, but what their sentiments really were.

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entertain the same thoughts and the same belief as to the Virgin Mary which the Church of Rome now suggests, and teaches, and requires of her members.

Surely, had Jerome felt that Mary was the "ground of his hope," had he "invoked her protection and guidance," had he been aware of such feelings or such practices prevailing among his Christian contemporaries, indications of this must have shewn themselves in some part or other of his works; but not a shadow of anything of the kind is discoverable.

This is the testimony of Jerome, who, though born about the middle of the fourth century, brings down our evidence through some years of the fifth century, his death probably not having taken place till the year 420; and some of his epistles being with great reason referred to a date so late as A.D. 417, or A.D. 418.

SECTION II.—BASIL OF SELEUCIA, A.D. 425.*

About this time lived Basil, Bishop of Seleucia. The greatness of the number of those who were called by the name of Basil renders it very difficult to pronounce of any work, published under that name, to whose pen it may be safely ascribed. To this Basil, as its author, a work is now referred, which cannot stand the test of close examination. Dausqueius, the Jesuit, so late as the year 1661, was the first who published Basil's works in Greek, adding his own Latin translation; and he informs us that Basil's works had only lately been drawn out from their hiding-place; and that Andreas Schottus, his brother-Jesuit, had sent a copy to him in Greek.† What were the circumstances and the appearance of the manuscript, and on what authority he ascribed it to this Basil, we know not; whilst the evidence against

* Paris, 1622. † Dausqueius, in his Dedication.

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the homily, both internal and external, is too strong to be set aside. Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who lived in the ninth century, expressly says that this Basil wrote fifteen homilies, which he enumerates, specifying their subjects, and this is not one of them; though he says that other compositions were carried about under his name. The homily professes to have been delivered on the feast of the Annunciation, though no allusion to that feast is found for two centuries after this Basil lived.*

The works of this writer are not alluded to in the decree of Pope Gelasius, nor consequently in the Canon Law of Rome.

And Bellarmin himself, in his treatise on Ecclesiastical Writers, makes no mention either of the writings or even of the name of this Basil.

SECTION III.—OROSIUS AND SEDULIUS.†

Among the doctors approved of by the Roman Canon Law are Orosius and Sedulius. We are unwilling to omit any one of those who are received by the Church of Rome as authorities in matters of Christian faith and practice, and we have therefore thought it necessary to examine the scanty remains of these two writers.

Orosius, a Spaniard, called in the Canon Law "a very learned man," and whose date is about the year 400, wrote seven books on the History of Rome, through which he traces the hand of Divine Providence preparing the way for the Christian dispensation. In this work he speaks of the Saviour as the Son of God and Man, the offspring of a Virgin. He wrote also a work

* See Appendix B. † Bib. Vet. Pat. Venice, 1773, tom. ix.

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full of theological erudition on the Freedom of the Will. In the course of this treatise many opportunities offered themselves of referring to Mary, had he associated with her name the ideas of sinless perfection, or had he regarded her as a mediator and intercessor, or as one who was to be invoked by us sinners. But he makes no mention of her. He refers to St. Paul, and St. Peter, and St. James, and Zacharias, and the Canaanitish woman, and others; but to the Virgin Mary he makes no reference at all. He speaks of Christ as the only Mediator and Intercessor.

SEDULIUS, to whom the Canon Law assigns the title of "Venerable," in his beautiful Christian poems, speaks much of the Virgin as the Mother of Him, who was God from eternity, and Man born in this world; and in a passage, lately quoted by a Roman Catholic bishop, he speaks of her as the woman through whom alone the way of life was effected. But we find nothing in Sedulius to countenance a Christian either in addressing Mary in prayer, or in praying to God through her intercession. His testimony may with the greatest degree of probability be referred to the year of our Lord 440; though some place it earlier, others later.

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CHAPTER IV.

COUNCILS OF CONSTANTINOPLE, EPHESUS, AND THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON.*

It will be borne in mind that the legend on which the doctrine of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary is founded, professes to trace the tradition to Juvenal, Archbishop of Jerusalem, when he was sojourning in Constantinople for the purpose of attending the General Council of Chalcedon. To the emperor and empress, who presided at that council, Juvenal is said to have communicated the tradition, as received in Palestine, that the body of Mary was miraculously removed from the tomb into heaven. This circumstance would, of itself, induce us to ascertain, by an examination of the records of the council, whether any traces may be found confirmatory of such a tradition, or otherwise: but further, the questions discussed at that council, closely bearing on the main subject of our inquiry, would of themselves make a thorough examination of its records indispensable; and since that council cannot be regarded as an insulated assembly, but as a continuation rather, or re-assembling, of the preceding minor Councils of Constantinople and Ephesus, it will be necessary briefly to refer to the occasion and nature generally of all those Christian synods. Nothing seems to have transpired

* Conc. Gen. Florence, 1761; vols. v. vi. vii.

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in the previous councils which could be brought as evidence on the subject of our inquiry, beyond, at least, the general and strong negative evidence of the absence throughout of all reference to the Virgin Mary's glory, influence, patronage, and intercession; whereas, the questions which had disturbed Christendom, and were agitated in these councils in the very middle of the fifth century, inseparable from a perpetually recurring mention of the Virgin's name, afforded an opportunity at every turn to those who composed the councils and all connected with them, including the Bishop of Rome himself, of expressing their sentiments towards her. The nature of the present work precludes us from entering at any length upon the character and history of these, or of antecedent councils; a few words, however, seem requisite to enable us to judge of the nature and weight of the evidence borne by them on the question immediately before us.

The source of all the disputes which then rent the Church of Him who had bequeathed peace, as his best and last gift, to his followers, was the anxiety to define and explain the nature of the great Christian mystery—the incarnation of the Son of God. All parties appealed to the Nicene Creed; though there seems to have been, to say the least, much misunderstanding, and unnecessary violence, and party spirit on all sides. The celebrated Eutyches of Constantinople was charged with having espoused heterodox doctrine, by maintaining that in Christ was only one nature—the incarnate Word. On this charge he was accused before a council held at Constantinople in A.D. 448. His doctrine was considered to involve a denial of the human nature of the Son of God. The council con-

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demned him of heresy, deposed and excommunicated him. From this proceeding Eutyches appealed to a general council. A council (the authority of which has been solemnly denied, but with what adequate reason, it belongs not to our present inquiry to determine,) was convened at Ephesus in the following year by the Emperor Theodosius. The proceedings of this assembly were accompanied by lamentable unfairness and violence. Eutyches was acquitted and restored by this council, and his accusers were condemned and persecuted; Flavianus, Archbishop of Constantinople, who had summoned the preceding council, being even scourged and exiled. That patriarch, in his distress, sought the good offices of Leo, Bishop of Rome, who espoused his cause; but who failed, nevertheless, of inducing Theodosius to convene a general council. His successor Marcian, however, consented; and, in the year 451, the Council was convened, which first meeting at Nice, was by adjournment removed to Chalcedon. In this council all the proceedings, as well of the Council of Constantinople as of Ephesus, were rehearsed at length; and, from a close examination of the proceedings of those three councils, only one inference seems deducible,—namely, that the invocation of the Virgin Mary had not then obtained that place in the Christian Church which the Church of Rome now assigns to it; a place, however, which the Church of England, among other branches of the Catholic Church, maintains that it cannot, without a sacrifice of the sound and unalterable principles of religious worship, be suffered to retain.

The grand question then, agitated with too much asperity and too little charity, was this; Whether, by the

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incarnation, our blessed Saviour became possessed of two natures, the divine and human. Subordinate to this, and necessary for its decision, was involved the question, What part of his nature, if any, Christ derived from the Virgin Mary? Again and again does this question bring the name, the office, the circumstances, and the nature of that holy and blessed mother of our Lord before these councils. The name of Mary is continually in the mouth of the accusers, the accused, the judges, and the witnesses; and had Christian pastors then entertained the same feelings of devotion towards her,—had they professed the same belief as to her assumption into heaven, and her influence and authority in directing the destinies of man, and in protecting the Church on earth,—had they habitually appealed to her with the same prayers for her intercession and good offices, and placed the same confidence in her as we find now exhibited even in the authorized services of the Roman Ritual,—it is impossible to conceive that no signs, no intimation, not the slightest reference to such views and feelings, should, either directly or incidentally, have shewn themselves, somewhere or other, among the manifold and protracted proceedings of these councils. A diligent search has been made; but no expression on the part of the orthodox can be found as to Mary's nature and office, or as to our feelings and conduct towards her, in which a member of the Church of England would not heartily acquiesce. No sentiment can be found implying invocation or religious worship of any kind, or in any degree; no allusion to her assumption is there.

The works of Leo, who in the documents of this coun-

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cil is frequently called Archbishop of Rome,* and who is a canonized saint of that Church, will be hereafter examined as affording independent testimony. In his letters to Julian, Bishop of Cos, he speaks of Christ as born of "a Virgin;" "the blessed Virgin;" "the pure undefiled Virgin;"† and, in his letters to the Empress Pulcheria, he calls the mother of our Lord simply "the Virgin Mary;" or "the blessed Virgin Mary;" or simply "the Virgin-Mother." In his celebrated letter to Flavian, Archbishop of Constantinople, (not one word of which, according to the decree of the Roman council under Gelasius, is to be questioned by any man, on pain of incurring an anathema,) Pope Leo says, that Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary his mother, who brought him forth with the same virgin purity with which she had conceived him. Flavianus, in his confession of faith to the Emperor Theodosius, affirms that Christ was born "of Mary the Virgin, of the same substance with the Father according to his Godhead, of the same substance with his mother according to his manhood."‡ He speaks of her afterwards as "the holy Virgin."

There is, indeed, one expression, to which we have already referred, used in a quotation from Cyril of Alexandria, and adopted in these transactions, which requires a few words of especial observation. The word is THEOTOCOS, which the Latins were accustomed to transfer into their works, only substituting the Roman for the Greek characters, but which afterwards the writers of the Church of Rome translated by DEIPARA, and in more recent times by

* Vol. v. p. 1418.

† Leo, Works, vol. i. pp. 1049, 980, 801, &c.

‡ Vol. vi. p. 539.

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Dei Mater (Mother of God), Dei Genitrix, Creatoris Genitrix; employing those terms, not in explanation of the two-fold nature of Christ, as was the case in these councils, but in exaltation of Mary, his Virgin-Mother. This word, as we have seen, in its primitive sense, was adopted by Christians in much earlier times than the Council of Chalcedon; but it was employed to express more strongly the Catholic belief in the divine and human nature of Him who was Son both of God and man, and by no means for the purpose of raising Mary into an object of religious adoration.* The sense in which it was used was explained in the 7th act of the Council of Constantinople, repeated at Chalcedon, as given by Cyril of Alexandria: "According to this sense of an unconfused union, we confess the Holy Virgin to be THEOTOCOS, because that God the Word was made flesh, and became man, and from that very conception united with himself the temple received from her."

Nothing in our present inquiry turns upon the real meaning of the word THEOTOCOS. Some, who have been among the brightest ornaments of the Church of England, have adopted the language, "Mother of God;" while many others among us believe that the original sense would be more correctly conveyed by the expression, "Mother of Him who was God."

* It is curious to remark, that (according to Balusius) all the ancient books, and all the editions of the records of these councils before the Roman edition, retained in the Latin translation the Greek word THEOTOCOS; and when it was, at length, translated by "Dei Genitrix," the editor thought it necessary, in justification of so novel a form, to ask, "Who doubts that this is a good interpretation?" Vol. vi. p. 735.

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SECTION II.

There are other points in the course of these important proceedings to which our attention is invited, with the view of contrasting the sentiments of the Bishop of Rome in the middle of the fifth century, and also the expressions employed by other chief pastors of Christ's flock, with the language of the appointed authorized services of the Roman Church now, and the sentiments of her reigning Pontiff and accredited ministers.

The circumstances of the Church throughout Christendom, as represented in Leo's letter in the fifth century, and the circumstances of the Church of Rome, as lamented by the present Pope in 1832,* are in many respects very similar. The end desired by Leo and by Flavianus, his brother-pastor and contemporary, Bishop of Constantinople, and by Gregory, now Bishop of Rome, is one and the same; namely, the suppression of heresy, the prevalence of the truth, and the unity of the Christian Church. But how widely and how strikingly different are the foundations on which they respectively build their hopes for the attainment of that end!

The present Roman Pontiff's hopes, and desires, and exhortations are thus expressed:

"That all may have a successful and happy issue, let us raise our eyes to the most blessed Virgin Mary, WHO ALONE destroys heresies, who is our greatest hope, YEA, THE ENTIRE GROUND OF OUR HOPE. May she exert her patronage to draw down an efficacious blessing on our desires, our plans, and proceedings in

* See page 59 of this work.

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the present straitened condition of our Lord's flock! We will also implore in humble prayer from Peter the Prince of the Apostles, and from his fellow-Apostle Paul, that you may all stand as a wall to prevent any other foundation than what hath been laid; and, supported by this cheering hope, we have confidence that the author and finisher of faith, Jesus Christ, will at last console us all in the tribulations which have found us exceedingly. To you, venerable brethren, and the flocks committed to your care, we most lovingly impart, as auspicious of celestial help, the apostolic benediction. Dated at Rome, from St. Mary Major's, August 15, the festival of the Assumption of the same blessed Virgin Mary, the year of our Lord 1832, of our pontificate the second."

How deplorable a change! how melancholy a degeneracy is here evinced from the faith, and hopes, and sentiments of Christian bishops in days of old! In the hopes expressed by Leo and Flavian we seek in vain for any reference or allusion "to the blessed Virgin Mary as the destroyer of heresies, the greatest hope, the entire ground of a Christian's hope;" we seek in vain for any exhortation to the faithful "to raise their eyes to her in order to obtain a merciful and happy issue." To God, and God alone, are the faithful exhorted to pray; on God, and God alone, do those Christians, whether at Rome or at Constantinople, declare that their hopes rely; God alone they regard as the destroyer of heresies, the restorer of peace, and the protector of the Church's unity. "Their greatest hope, yea, the entire ground of their hope," the Being to be "implored in humble prayer," is not Mary, nor Peter, nor Paul, but God alone, the Creator of the world, the Redeemer of mankind, the sanctifier of

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Mary, and Peter, and Paul, and of all the elect people of God. Thus, Flavian, writing to Leo, says: "Wherefore" [in consequence of those errors, and heresies, and distractions which he had deplored,] "we must be sober, and watch unto prayer, and draw nigh to God; and cast away foolish questions, and follow the Fathers, and not go beyond the eternal landmarks taught us by the Holy Scriptures."* And again: "Thus will the heresy which has arisen, and the consequent commotion, be easily destroyed by your holy letters with the assistance of God."† Thus Leo in his turn, writing to Julian, Bishop of Cos, utters this truly Christian sentiment:‡ "May the mercy of God, as we trust, grant that, without the loss of any soul, the sound parts may be protected against the darts of the devil, and the wounded parts may be healed! May God preserve you safe and sound, most honoured brother!"‡ Thus the same Bishop of Rome, writing to Flavian in the most celebrated of his epistles, expressed his hopes in these words: "Confidently trusting that the help of God will be present, so that one who has been misled, condemning the vanity of his own thoughts, may be saved. May God preserve you in health and strength, most beloved brother!"§ We must not dwell longer on these most interesting documents. The whole Council of Chalcedon, at the conclusion of all, and when the triumph was considered to have been secured over Eutyches, and their gratitude was expressed that all heresy had been destroyed, instead of referring to Mary as the "sole destroyer of here-

* Leo, vol. i. p. 751; Conc. vol. v. p. 1330.
† Leo, vol. i. p. 791; Conc. vol. v. p. 1355.
‡ Leo, vol. i. p. 883; Conc. vol. v. p. 1423.
§ Leo, vol. i. p. 838; Conc. vol. v. p. 1390.

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sies," shouted, as if with the voice of one man, from side to side, "IT IS GOD ALONE who hath done this!"* Neither antecedently did their chief pastors exhort them to "raise their eyes to Mary," and promise to "implore" what they needed "in humble prayer from Peter and Paul;" neither in the straitened condition of the Lord's flock did they invoke any other than God. And when truth prevailed, and the victory was won, while they were lavish of their grateful thanks to the emperor and his queen, who were present and had succoured them, of help from the invisible world they make no mention, save only of the Lord's: they had implored neither angel, nor saint, nor the Virgin, to be their protector and patron; and neither angel, nor saint, nor Virgin shared their praises; God, and God alone, through Christ, was exalted in that day.

* Conc. vol. vii. p. 174.

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CHAPTER V.

SECTION I.—ISIDORE OF PELUSIUM, A.D. 450. *

ISIDORE, called of Pelusium from the mountain of that name near one of the mouths of the Nile, where the convent stood of which he was the abbot, was a disciple of St. Chrysostom, and was celebrated as a philosopher, a rhetorician, and a divine. His death is with much probability referred to A.D. 450. His works are of a very peculiar character, consisting almost entirely, if not altogether, of letters addressed to various persons on subjects chiefly in immediate connexion with the faith and life of Christians. It is said that they once amounted to ten thousand, of which more than two thousand are preserved to our times. There are some very interesting and very beautiful portions in the remains of this Christian writer, which no believer can carefully read without profit; for example, his very striking practical application of the Lord's Prayer, in the 24th epistle of the 4th book.

On this Father's evidence on the worship of the Virgin, we need say but very few words. In the nearly three thousand letters written on various subjects of deep interest to every Christian, the name of Mary is scarcely found at all; and the passages are very few in which any reference is made to her as the mother of our Lord. The following are the most important pas-

* Paris, 1638.

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sages—rather, the only important passages—discovered on the subject. The reader will immediately see how far these passages indicate the absence of all such religious feelings and practices towards the Virgin as our Roman Catholic brethren now profess and maintain.

"We must not seek from nature proofs of things above nature; for, though the Word became flesh, yet Christ is not a mere man, but rather God become man. In the two natures he is the one Son of God."*

"'I am not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,' said the Lord to the Canaanitish woman, desiring to fulfil the promise made to Abraham, having both taken upon Him his seed, and having chosen a mother from it, and in her and of her having been made flesh and become man, in all things like ourselves, sin only except."†

"The holy volume of the Gospels bringing down the genealogy to Joseph, who drew his relationship from David, sufficed to shew through him, that the Virgin also was of the same tribe with David, since the Divine Law directed marriages to be made between persons of the same tribe."‡

"You ask, What more excessive tenet, or what doctrine different from ours, do the deceived and polytheistical Greeks maintain when they write of the mother of the gods; whereas we also believe in a mother of God? Hear then briefly what I desire you to know truly. The Greeks acknowledge that the mother of their gods, even of the highest, both conceived and brought forth from incontinence and nameless passions; neither ignorant nor guiltless of any species of wantonness as the mother of such beings. But her, whom we confess to be the mother of our God incarnate, all gene-

* Book i. ep. 405. † Book i. ep. 121. ‡ Book i. ep. 7.

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rations of men acknowledge to have conceived one Son, in one solitary way, without seed, and without corruption."* Having then described the sufferings of our Saviour, Isidore proceeds: "His resurrection proved him to be a suffering incarnate Deity, and that she who brought him forth was the mother of an incarnate Deity. The circumstances, therefore, being the same, we must adopt the same names."† "Let nothing be suffered to become an impediment to the Gospel of our Lord, and let no distraction of mind attend spiritual instruction; nor let the intervention of any disturbance interrupt useful discussion: for neither did Christ, when he was sought for by his mother and his brethren, pay attention to their call, when he had begun his instruction, and was attending to the salvation of his hearers; shewing that spiritual things should be held in higher estimation than carnal."

This brings us to the middle of the fifth century.

SECTION II.—THEODORET, A. D. 450.‡

THEODORET was born at Antioch, about A.D. 386: he was educated by monks in a convent near his native place; and continued to live among them till he became Bishop of Cyrus, in Syria, about A. D. 420. He was considered to have been unsettled in his views on the theological questions which then agitated Christendom, and at one time to have espoused the side of Nestorius. When Cyril of Alexandria contended on these points with John Bishop of Antioch, Theodoret opposed him, but they were afterwards reconciled. He was deprived of his bishopric by the second Council of Ephesus, but was restored by the Council of Chal-

* Book i. ep. 54. † Lib. i. ep. 159.

‡ [Paris, 1642, four vols. fol.] Halle, 1769, five vols. oct.

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cedon, after he had most solemnly declared himself a firm adherent to the Catholic faith. His testimony brings us down to about A.D. 457.

It is impossible to read the works of Theodoret without finding in them evidence of the melancholy extent to which superstition had then shot forth its roots and branches, and encumbered the garden of the Lord. We find in his writings indisputable proofs that Christians in his time, in their zeal to convert their heathen neighbours to the religion of the Cross, offered to them as an inducement the adoption of saints and martyrs in the place of their fabled divinities of the lower ranks. Thus were those saints and martyrs, who shed their blood rather than renounce their allegiance to the one only God, and their faith in the one only Mediator, made the substitutes of the household deities of paganism, and of the tutelary gods of the fields, and woods, and mountains, and seas, and winds, and storms. To this delusive and fatal principle, which, as we learn from Theodoret, gave great offence to the more enlightened among their heathen contemporaries, Christendom may ascribe, with tears of sorrow, a large and fearful share of those superstitious tenets and practices which well-nigh buried primitive faith and apostolic worship. But, gigantic as were the strides which superstition had then already taken, Christian worship is proved to have been still free from the invocation of the Virgin Mary, and primitive faith to have hitherto preserved the Church from the innovation of addressing God in prayer through her intercession. The subject which seems to have more than any other engaged the thoughts of Theodoret, and which indeed for a long period engrossed the interest of all Christendom, was the per-

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fect union in our blessed Saviour of the Divine and Human nature. Disputes inseparable from the defence of the truth on the several points connected with this question banished peace from the kingdom of the Prince of peace on earth; whilst the theological combatants spoke, and seem to have felt and acted towards each other, with all the bitterness and hatred of personal enemies. But these disputes, of necessity, involved at every turn an inquiry into the office sustained in the mystery of the incarnation by the Virgin Mary herself. One question held to be of great moment was, whether the title of Theotocos (she who gave birth to Him who was God) could be applied properly to her. Never did any theological controversy give more ample room for the full development of whatever sentiments of reverence and religion were entertained towards her; and yet we find throughout, that the thoughts of Christians were then fixed, not on the superior excellence of the Virgin personally, but on the nature of her office in giving birth to the Saviour. The question really was, not whether the Virgin was the proper object of religious adoration, but whether that fruit of her womb, which the angel pronounced to be the Son of the Highest, and to have David for his father, Jesus born of her in Bethlehem, though one Christ, was very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, as well as very man of her substance,—this was the question really at issue. Doubtless, the mystery of God manifest in the flesh invested the mother of our Lord with a mysterious name and character peculiarly her own, and which no other daughter of Eve could ever share; and, if we understand Theodoret rightly,* we see that persons were beginning in his time to apply

* Epist. 151. See vol. iv. p. 1302.

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to her, in elucidation of that mystery, titles which had not before been ascribed to her. But we find no trace whatever in his writings of any invocation of her; no application to her to exert on the supplicant's behalf her interest with God; no supplication to God to allow the intercession of the Virgin to prevail with him for mercy. A very few passages will enable the reader to form a correct estimate of the evidence of Theodoret. He tells us that Mary was called Joseph's wife, because she was betrothed to him.* He (in common with some previous writers) interprets the gate described by Ezekiel † as prophetic of the Virgin's womb.‡ He tells us, that though she was ten thousand times pure, yet was she the offspring of David, Abraham, and Adam; and that, from her, He who was Truth itself sprang."§ And when he declares the Christian's belief in the resurrection of the dead, he says, "Of that resurrection the first-fruits was our Lord Jesus Christ, who received from Mary, Theotocos, a body verily and not in appearance."‖

On the unconfused substance of Christ, Theodoret thus speaks: "The natures were not confused, but remained in their integrity. If we thus view the subject, we shall see the harmony of the Evangelists; for concerning that only-begotten, the Lord Christ, one proclaims what belongs to the Divinity, another what belongs to the Humanity: and the Lord Christ himself teaches us to take this view; at one time

* Vol. i. p. 276. † xliv. 1, 2, 3. ‡ Vol. ii. p. 1032.

§ Vol. i. p. 1207.—The Editor, in the second Index, under the word Maria, thinks this a wretched interpolation, and suggests that the meaning is, "Although she is a hundred times pure, yet she descended from David, Abraham, and Adam, and consequently could not be herself the Justice and Truth which came down from heaven."

‖ Vol. iii. p. 745.

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calling himself the Son of God, at another the Son of Man; and at one time he honours his mother as her who gave him birth, at another as her Lord he chides her."*

In a letter to a bishop named Irenæus, having appealed to the conduct of men towards each other in secular affairs, who do not insist upon all combatants employing the same weapons of attack and defence, he thus speaks of theological controversy: "Thus ought we to judge of those who contend in the cause of religion: we ought not to seek for names which may breed contention, but arguments which may clearly spread the truth abroad, and which may fill the gainsayers with shame. For what difference does it make whether we call the holy Virgin anthropotocos [her who bare a man] at once and theotocos [her who bare God], or to call her the mother and the handmaid of him whom she bare; and to add, moreover, that she is the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ as man, and his handmaid as God, and thus to silence all pretext for carping, while we convey the same idea by another expression? Besides this, we ought to observe, that one of those is a common appellation, the other exclusively the Virgin's; and that all the controversy has arisen on this point, which ought not to be. And most of the ancient Fathers have applied the more honourable appellation to the Virgin. And your piety also has done this in two or three orations which I have in my possession, you having kindly sent them to me; and you, my lord, have not added the word anthropotocos to the word theotocos, but have conveyed the same sense in other words."†

* Vol. iv. p. 105. † Epist. xvi. vol. iv. p. 1077.

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There are many passages in this ancient Father all leading to the same conclusion, that in his view Mary was a holy and blessed Virgin ever to be held in reverence and honour as the mother and the handmaid of the Lord; but by no means is she represented by him as the object of invocation, or one whose mediation and intercession Christians might plead with God. We must not swell this volume by the citation of many such passages; and yet some there are which so clearly lay before us the true Catholic doctrine of the incarnation, and the general views and feelings of Theodoret and his contemporaries on the subject before us, that we should not feel justified in passing on to another witness without dwelling somewhat longer on his testimony.

Having quoted the prophecy of Isaiah which announces the future Messiah as the Mighty God, he says, "If the Child born of the Virgin is called the Mighty God, with reason is she who brought him forth called theotocos; for she who bears, shares the honour of him who is born:"* adding, moreover, this explanation of St. Paul saying of Christ, "without father, without mother;" "for he is without father as to his manhood, for as man he was brought forth only by his mother; and he is without mother as to his Godhead, for he was begotten of his Father alone before the worlds." In the same letter† he thus writes: "But if we confess Christ, and declare Christ to be God and man, who is so foolish as to shun the word anthropotocos in conjunction with theotocos? for in the case of the Lord Christ we use both appellations; wherefore the Virgin is honoured and called

* Vol. iv. p. 1311. † Vol. iv. p. 1303.

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"highly favoured" [or "full of grace"].* What sensible person then would refuse to apply names derived from the Saviour's names to the Virgin, who through him is held in honour by the faithful? for it is not that He who sprang from her derives his dignity from her, but she through Him who was born of her is adorned with the highest appellations. Now, if Christ were only God, and had derived the origin of his existence from the Virgin, then let the Virgin be called and named Theotocos, as having given birth to him who by nature is God. But if Christ is both God and man, and the one nature was ever,—for he never began to exist, being coeternal with the Father,—and the other in these last days sprang from human nature, let him who wishes to state doctrines entwine the Virgin's appellations from both these views, shewing what appertains to nature and what to the union; but if any one is desirous of speaking in the panegyric form, and to weave hymns, and compose praises, and wishes at all events to employ the more dignified appellations, not stating doctrines, but panegyrising, and, as much as possible, holding up to admiration the greatness of the mystery, let him enjoy his desire, and employ the great names, and let him praise and admire: we find many such things among orthodox teachers. But everywhere let moderation be regarded highly." †

It is right to observe here, that Theodoret is checking the tendency, which then was evidently rising, to employ, when speaking of the Virgin, the more ho-

* Theodoret here uses the Greek word employed by St. Luke.

† There are two other passages of a similar kind which will repay the reader's examination, though they throw no additional light on the immediate subject before us beyond what the paragraphs we have already quoted are found to impart; vol. v. p. 1082 and p. 1086.

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nourable title of Theotocos, exclusively of the other equally essential name Anthropotocos; and that, whilst he would urge the Christian instructor in his doctrine not to throw into the background the tenet of Christ's perfect manhood, by always speaking of Mary as the mother exclusively of him who was God, he allows a greater liberty to the poet and the panegyrist. We have often had to remark, that the error of the worship of the Virgin, as well indeed as the invocation of saints in general, owed its origin mainly to the enthusiastic and unchastened language of popular harangues. To this error Theodoret gives no countenance. His testimony brings us within the latter half of the fifth century.

SECTION III.—PROSPER, A. D. 460.*

Contemporary with Isidore of Pelusium, though a few years younger, was Prosper of Acquitaine, who died about A. D. 463, whom the Roman law honours as "a very religious man." To this character of Prosper we cordially add our humble testimony, as far as the mind and heart of an author are discernible through his writings by a fellow-mortal. His reference of all that we have of spiritual good to the grace of Christ alone; the steady constant fixing of the eye of faith on our blessed Saviour; his entire renunciation of all human merits; the pure love of high and unaffected piety throughout; his strong and warm-hearted exhortation to a persevering study of Holy Scripture;—these, with his many other excellences, recommend him much and dearly to every true Chris-

* Paris, 1711, and 1739.

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tian. His annotations on the Psalms, from the hundredth to the last, are in themselves very beautiful; having a truly spiritual and evangelical tone pervading them throughout; and few will not feel regret that we have not the same pious man's assistance in our interpretation and Christian application of the larger portion of that holy book.

We find no passage in which he alludes to the Virgin as an object of religious worship, or a source of the Christian's hope: he speaks of Christ as the offspring of the unspotted Virgin; and of her he says no more. But he does bid us, again and again, look to the atoning merits of our Saviour, and to his prevailing intercession; and to anchor our hope on his mercy alone. We have room only for the citation of a very few passages.

In his commentary on the Psalms* he speaks of the prayer in which our Lord is now daily interceding for us, and alludes to no other intercessor;† and he asks, What ruler and guide have the wicked, except the devil? whom would the faithful have, except Christ? He tells us that of the religious man, here, the only hope is God, and, hereafter, the only reward is God.‡ He cheers us too with such sentiments as these.

"The confidence of those who hope is God's mercy. Let no one fear because of his iniquities when he would approach God the Lord; only let him give up himself with his whole heart, and cease from willing and from doing what displeases even himself; let him not say that such and such a sin may be perhaps forgiven, whilst another, from its very nature, must be punished; but let him cry out from the depths, and let him hope

* Ps. 140. † Ps. 141. ‡ Ps. 129.

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from the morning-watch even until night; because his Redeemer, who is without sin, for this very reason shed his precious blood for the unjust, that he might blot out all the sins of all who believe in him."

In his poem on the Ungrateful, he teaches us to depend upon God's grace alone, and to ascribe all our righteous deeds to him alone, renouncing utterly all human merit. The work is written in hexameter verse, and cannot fail to lose much of its point and beauty from such a literal translation as can alone be satisfactory when we are seeking evidence. Having asked, Why should we feel any false shame, in this valley of tears, to confess that without God we are of ourselves nothing? he thus proceeds:

"And yet, if we direct our thoughts to holy actions, when the chaste mind resists the desires of the flesh, when we yield not to the tempter, and, though harassed with bitter sufferings, we remain with heart unhurt, we act then with liberty. True: but it is a liberty redeemed for us, of which God is the ruler: and from the supreme light the Light is our life, health, virtue, wisdom. The Grace of Christ is that by which it runs, rejoices, endures, avoids, chooses, is urgent, believes, hopes, loves, is cleansed, is justified."*

"For, if we do anything, we do it by thy assistance, O Lord: Thou movest our hearts; Thou suggestest the prayer of one who seeks that which Thou art willing to give; keeping what thou bestowest, and creating merits from merits, and crowning largely thine own gifts. We must not, however, think that our care is lessened, or our pursuit of virtue slackened, or that the work of our mind grows torpid by this, that the

* Verse 971.

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good deeds of the Saints are thine, and whatever in them is healthful or strong derives its life and health from Thee, so that the will of man might seem to do nothing, whilst Thou dost effect all. And what without Thee does that will effect, except that thing by which it is an exile banished far from Thee, destined by its own motion to enter on precipitous paths out of the way, unless Thou, O Good Being, take it up when wearied and faint, and carry it back, and cherish, defend, and adorn it? Then its course becomes swift, its eyes see, its liberty is free, its wisdom is wise, its judgment is just, its virtue is strong, its faculties are sound. Of this help may we always feel the need; from it may our will advance; without this may our bodily senses exercise no power, and may all slavish work cease; and, whilst Thy will, and not our own, is operative in us, may we enjoy our lawful sabbaths and our holy festivals!" *

In such a man as this it were vain to seek for any proofs of hope resting elsewhere than in God alone. He bids us proceed boldly to the Throne of Grace, trusting in the Saviour's atoning blood, and, renouncing all our own good deeds, plead only for mercy through His merits, and hoping to be heard only through His intercession.

Prosper was a disciple of St. Augustine, and secretary to Pope Leo. He was not taken to the rest which awaits the people of God till about the year A.D. 463.

* Verse 982.

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SECTION IV.—VINCENT OF LIRENS, A.D. 430.

In the short but celebrated work of this writer, called Commonitorium, a passage occurs which deserves, on every account, our serious attention. He was Bishop of an island called Lirens, or, as Bellarmin says, of a monastery of that name;* and his work, written about the year 434, is directed against the several heresies which had then perverted Scripture doctrine, and disturbed the peace of Christendom. In his introductory remarks, he points out with equal brevity and clearness the use of primitive tradition in our inquiries after the Apostolic doctrine, and the faith once delivered to the Saints.

The whole passage, to which alone our thoughts are now especially called, is the following: Nestorius held that there were two sons; one, who was God from the Father; the other, man born of his mother; "Consequently, that the holy Mary is not to be called Theotocos, because, forsooth, of her was born, not that Christ who was God, but that Christ who was man." He then proceeds: "Through this unity of person, by reason of a like miracle, it was brought to pass, that, the flesh of the Word growing entirely from his mother, God the Word himself is with most truly Catholic faith believed, and is with greatest impiety denied, to have been born of a virgin. This being the case, let not any one attempt to defraud the holy Mary of the privileges and special glory of divine grace. For by the singular gift of our Lord and God, her Son, she must be most truly and blessedly confessed to be Theotocos; yet not in that sense Theotocos, in which

* Vol. vii. De Scriptor. Eccles.

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a certain impious heresy supposes, which asserts that she is only to be called Mother of God by a figure of speech, namely, because she brought forth that man who afterwards was made God; just as we speak of the mother of a bishop or a priest, not because she gives birth to one already a bishop or priest, but by producing that man who afterwards was made priest or bishop. Not so is the holy Mary Theotocos; but for this reason rather, because in her most holy womb the mystery was effected, that, by a singular and solitary unity of person, as the Word was flesh in flesh, so man in God is God."

After making this most explicit declaration of the Catholic faith, "that the Word, the Son of the Father, very and eternal God of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin of her substance;" and after reprobating, with sentiments of abhorrence, the rashness and impiety of those who would rob the Virgin of her lawful character and honour as the mother of that man who was very God; how does Vincentius proceed? Had he been trained in that school which professes to offer to Mary religious invocation, to pray to our heavenly Father through her intercession, to honour her above Angels and Cherubim, and to regard Mary as the chief source of a Christian's hope, surely some intimation of such principles would not fail to have appeared in this place. The author does indeed immediately pronounce blessings, and honour, and reverence; yet Mary is not the object of his pious admiration, but the Church, which maintains the truth as to the person of Christ: he does draw a comparison between what is now going on in this world, and the exalted duties and office of the holy Angels; but it is the profession of

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the true faith in Christ, not the glory of the Virgi
Mother, of which he speaks.

"Blessed Catholic Church, which worships One Go
in the fulness of the Trinity, and also the Equality
the Trinity in one Godhead! Blessed Church, whic
believes that there are two true and perfect substanc
in Christ, but Christ to be one person! By that (th
unity of person) we confess both man to be the Son
God, and God to be the Son of the Virgin. Blesse
therefore, and worshipful, praised and most holy, an
altogether to be compared with the praise of Angel
above, is that confession which glorifies one Lord Go
in threefold sanctification."

To the sound and clear views of this author on th
doctrine of progressive improvement and developmen
we have referred in the Introduction.

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CHAPTER VI.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, A.D. 440.*

CYRIL became Bishop of Alexandria in the year 412. In 403 we are told that he was present at Chalcedon when Chrysostom was deposed. He was called by many the Rule, or Standard, of sound doctrine,—in his opinions removed equally from the errors of Eutyches and of Nestorius. Perhaps, among all the more voluminous primitive writers, the works of no one so much require a thorough, searching, and enlightened examination. The Paris editors did little, or rather nothing, in the way of separating the genuine productions of Cyril from the forgeries which are made to bear his name. We cannot but lament that the Benedictines left him untouched. Even they might, perhaps, have stamped with their seal of approbation some works which a more successful criticism would have discarded; but we should not have found, still mingled with the undoubted labours of Cyril, compositions which palpably carry their own condemnation with them. Some persons, indeed, have spoken in so disparaging a manner of Cyril as might deter any one from undertaking the task of separating his genuine works from the spurious, lest, after all, the result should not repay the labour. But many of us are persuaded that the task would be amply com-

* Paris, six vols. fol. 1638.

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pensated, both by the satisfaction which would accrue to the labourer himself, and the benefit conferred on the cause of Christian truth. It is not necessary that we should acquiesce in all the interpretations of Scripture adopted by this truly evangelical and apostolic man in order to feel sentiments of admiration and gratitude for his example in one essential particular,—his habitual reference to holy Scripture in support of whatever he advances as to doctrine or practice. It is indeed cheering and animating to witness in him so steady and constant an appeal to the word of God. "Our hope is all in Christ," is the golden sentiment with which he closes his treatise on the Right Faith ;* and, if we may judge of a writer's mind by his works, the same is the principle which filled his whole soul and guided his life. The thoughts of his heart seem to revolve round God in Christ as their centre; the Incarnate Word is all in all to him: he shews that he needed no other mediator than Christ Jesus alone; he looked for no other intercession than Christ's. In his genuine works we find much satisfactory proof that he neither invoked Mary, nor prayed to God through her intercession. All his hope was in Christ, and that hope was abundantly sufficient to cheer and support him on his way to heaven.

The subject which mainly occupied his thoughts compelled him to refer constantly to the Blessed Virgin. His whole soul was engaged and absorbed by the duty of establishing the doctrine, then assailed from opposite quarters, that the Blessed Fruit of her womb, the Lord Jesus Christ, was perfect God and perfect Man. In these references he speaks of her always with respect and reverence, as the mysterious Virgin-Mother

* Vol. vi. p. 180.

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of Him who was God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the world, and Man of the substance of Mary, born in the world. Thus he tells us that East and West confessed Mary to be Theotocos, parent of Him who was God.* He calls her generally the Holy Virgin, but he speaks as though her office was discharged when she gave birth to the Redeemer; and he never alludes to herself personally as an object of adoration or invocation, nor as possessed of any power to assist us, nor as one through whose intercession we might hope to procure the desires of our hearts when we approach God in prayer. Indeed, many of his sentiments would assure us that he thought and spoke of the Virgin Mary as we of the Church of England do now; whilst some of his expressions would seem to sink below that reverential feeling which our language generally implies. The following are the principal passages which bear upon our subject.

On the miracle at Cana he thus comments:† "He comes with his own disciples to the marriage, for it was right that they who desired to see his wonderful deeds should be present with him when he wrought the miracle, since they would draw from the deed, as it were, food for the faith that was in them. And, when wine failed the guests, his mother called the Lord, who was good, to his wonted kindness, saying, 'They have no wine.' For, as though he had authority to do whatsoever he would, she invites him to the miracle. 'Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.' Well did our Lord form this expression also for us; for he ought not to have run on to act full speed, or to appear a ready worker of miracles on his own mere motion; but to go to it with some diffi-

* Vol. vi. Epist. p. 30. † Vol. iv. p. 135.

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culty and after invitation, and to consult the wants of the case rather than the gratification of the hearers..... Especially does our Lord, by undertaking from respect towards his mother what he did not wish to do, shew that the honour due to parents is of the highest kind..... Having great influence towards bringing about the miracle, THE WOMAN prevailed, as was becoming, persuading the Lord as a son; and she began the matter by already preparing the attendants at the feast to do whatsoever might be ordered."

Cyril's comment * on the act of our Lord in consigning his mother to the care of St. John, is full of interest, and, as evidence on the point before us, is of much importance:

"'Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.' The divine Evangelist has profitably mentioned this also, shewing even in this that no one of the sacred words falls to the ground... He introduces as standing by the cross his mother, and with her the other women, evidently weeping; for the female race is much, we know, given to tears, and exceedingly prone to lamentations, especially when they have abundant reasons for shedding tears. What then persuaded the blessed Evangelist to dwell on such minute points as to specify the tarrying there of the women? His object was to teach us this: that, as was probable, his unexpected suffering gave offence to the very mother of our Lord herself; and the death upon the cross being very bitter, and besides this the mockings of the Jews, and the soldiers probably watching

* Vol. iv. p. 1064. Of the genuineness of this comment there is no doubt whatever. Bellarmin reckons this twelfth book on St. John among the undisputed works of Cyril.

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him at the very cross, and laughing to scorn HIM who hung upon it, and in the very sight of his mother daring to divide his garments, threw her somewhat. from the reasoning which became her. For, doubt not that she admitted some such reasonings as these: 'I gave birth to Him who is now laughed to scorn upon the cross; but, when he said he was the true Son of the Almighty God, perhaps he was somehow deceived. How could he, who said, 'I am the Life,' be crucified? And in what way could he be seized and bound by the cords of his murderers? How did he not master the designs of his persecutors? Why does he not come down from the cross, who commanded Lazarus to return to life, and astonished all Judea with his miracles?' It is exceedingly probable that the female mind (*τὸ γυναῖον*), not knowing the mystery, should slip into some such reasonings as these. For we shall do right in believing that the nature of those events was dreadful enough to turn from its course even the most sober mind; and it is nothing marvellous if a woman was made to stumble into this state. For if the chief of the blessed disciples himself, Peter, once was offended when Christ spoke and taught plainly that he was to be delivered into the hands of sinners, and to suffer the cross and death, so that he hastily exclaimed, 'That be far from thee, O Lord! that shall not happen unto thee!' what wonder is it if the delicate mind of a woman should be hurried into weaker views? And this we say, not vainly forming conjectures, as some may think; but drawn into our suspicion concerning the mother of our Lord, from what is written. For we remember that Simeon the Just, when he took our Lord, then a babe, into his arms, as it is written, gave thanks and said, 'Lord, now

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lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' And to the holy Virgin herself he said, 'Lo! this one is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be spoken against; yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed.' By the sword he meant the sharp attack of the passion, which distracted the female mind into reasonings which were out of place; for temptations try the hearts of those who suffer, and lay bare the reasonings which are in them."

"'When, therefore, Jesus saw his mother and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he said to his mother, Woman, behold thy son! then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! and from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.' He takes provident care of his mother, as if regardless of the excess of his suffering; for, though suffering, he felt it not: and he delivers her to his beloved disciple John, who was the writer of this book; and he bids him take her home, and regard her in the rank of a mother; and he charges again his mother to regard that true disciple in no other light than really as a son, namely, one who by respect and affection would fulfil and imitate the duties of a real son..... What good did Christ effect by this? In the first place, we say, that he wished to strengthen the principle, which is honoured even in the Law; for what says the ordinance by Moses? 'Honour thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee.'... When the Legislator then enacted that so great honour should be paid by us to our parents, how was it otherwise than becoming that so celebrated a commandment should be sanctioned by the suffrage

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of the Saviour? And since the character of every good and of every virtue came primarily through him, why should not this virtue also have run on together with the rest? for honour to parents is the most precious form of virtue. And tell me how, except first of all from Christ and in Christ, could we have learned that our affection for them must not be neglected, though a flood of intolerable misfortunes bear upon us? for he is truly the most exalted person who keeps the commandments, and is not driven from the pursuit of what is right, not so much in the time of a calm, as in the midst of storm and flood. To what I have already said, I would add, that how could it be otherwise than becoming for the Lord to take provident care of his own mother, when she had fallen so as to feel offence, and was confused by disordered thoughts? for, being the true God, and looking into the motions of the heart, and knowing what was in its depth, how could he but know the thoughts which at that time especially disturbed her at the honoured cross? Knowing, therefore, the reasonings which were in her, he delivered her to the disciple who was the best instructor in mysteries, and who was able well, and not inadequately, to explain the mystery; for he was a wise man and a divine, who both receives her and takes her away rejoicing, intending to fulfil the whole desire of the Saviour concerning her."

Here Cyril* tells us that Mary was astounded at the unexpected sufferings and death of her Son, and was unable to reconcile what she then saw with what he had told her of his divine nature; but that we must

* On this point Cyril takes, as we have seen, the same view with Tertullian, Origen, Basil, Chrysostom, Gregory of Nazianzum, Ambrose, Jerome, and others.

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not wonder at such weakness and stumbling in Mary, when even Peter himself felt somewhat of the same disappointment. Here Cyril tells us that our Saviour, when he saw the disturbed and disordered state of his mother's mind, arising from her ignorance of the divine dispensation, kindly entrusted her to St. John, who was a theologian profoundly acquainted with the divine will, and able to explain to her adequately the whole mystery of Christ's passion. Is it possible to read these passages, and not infer that St. Cyril of Alexandria was very far indeed from entertaining those sentiments concerning the perfection of the Virgin Mary which were afterwards propagated, and are still professed, by the Church of Rome?

The same conclusion is forced upon us by Cyril's reasoning in a homily delivered to a very crowded audience,* in which he speaks of the prophecy of Simeon, addressed to Mary, in such a manner as to leave no doubt that he ranked the Virgin below the Apostles both in faith and knowledge. "Simeon said to the holy Virgin, 'A sword shall pierce through thine own soul also;' by the 'sword,' meaning, perhaps, the pain which she felt on account of Christ, when she saw him, to whom she had given birth, crucified; not at all knowing that he was stronger than death, and would rise again from the dead. And do not wonder at all if the VIRGIN is ignorant on a point on which we shall find EVEN THE HOLY APOSTLES themselves to have been of little faith. Yea, the blessed Thomas, unless he had put his hand into his side, and touched the places of the nails, would not have believed, though the other disciples said that Christ was risen, and openly shewed himself to them. It was

* Vol. vi. p. 391.

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right that the truly wise Evangelist should teach us all things whatsoever the Son, through us and for our sakes, underwent when he became flesh, and did not disdain to take upon himself our poverty; that we might glorify him as our Redeemer and Lord, as our Saviour and God,—because to him and with him, to God, even the Father, with the Holy Ghost, is glory and power for ever and for ever. Amen."

We will only add one passage, contrasting very strikingly with those extraordinary representations of later times, which we find even in the authorized services of the Roman Church, and which abound in the works of her divines and in the books of devotion generally circulated; those, namely, in which the Virgin is represented as a being of such surpassing excellence, that far above all created beings, principalities and powers in heavenly places, far above all prophets and apostles, angels and cherubim, she stands next to God, to be approached by a worship peculiarly her own.

Having quoted St. Paul as applying to Christ the title of the Lord of Glory, and as representing him to be better than the angels, Cyril thus speaks:* "Now, to be, and to be called, the Lord of Glory, how is this otherwise than exceeding great, and surpassing every thing created, or brought to its birth? I pass by mortal things, for they are very small; but I say, that if any one should name angels, and enumerate the principalities, and thrones, and dominions, and mention also the highest seraphim, he would confess that these fall far short of His exceeding glory." Repeatedly does Cyril thus enumerate all things held in the highest honour by the faithful; but neither above,

* Vol. v. p. 697.

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nor among the highest does he ever mention the Virgin Mary.

And, yet, even to the testimony of this Cyril we are referred for proof that the Virgin is invoked, and "that to her, in some sort, the works of Christ are attributed."* The homily† quoted in evidence was for the first time admitted among the works of Cyril by Aubert, and in the sixth volume of his edition of Cyril's works is entitled "An Encomium of the same Cyril upon Holy Mary, the Theotocos."‡

This is one of those works which make us more especially regret that the Benedictine editors left Cyril of Alexandria without undergoing their examination. His homily cannot, in any point of view, be regarded as genuine: it carries its own condemnation with it, and evidently is the corrupt version of a rhapsody composed in a much later age than the Council of Ephesus. Our remarks upon it will be found in the Appendix.

* Dr. Wiseman's Remarks on Mr. Palmer's Letter, 1841, p. 25.

† Vol. vi. p. 379.

‡ There is, in the same volume, another version of the same homily, entitled "Of the same against Nestorius, when the Seven went down to the Holy Mary."

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CHAPTER VII.

LEO, A.D. 461.

LEO, the first Pope of that name, and a canonized saint of the Church of Rome, was advanced to the Popedom in A.D. 440, and, having governed that Church for twenty-one years, died A.D. 461. Few saints in the Roman calendar are spoken of with so much reverence as Leo. He is often represented as equal to the Apostles; and with such authority are his works invested that, A.D. 494, Pope Gelasius, and a council at Rome of seventy Bishops, assembled chiefly to determine what books should be held to be canonical, what apocryphal, what should be sanctioned, and what prohibited,* numbering Pope Leo's Letter to Flavian, Bishop of Constantinople, among the books to be sanctioned, add, "The text of which if any one shall dispute, even to a single iota, and shall not receive it in all things with reverence, let him be accursed." This celebrated letter was written in 449, and to it our attention has been already drawn, when the evidence of the Councils of Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon formed the subject of our inquiry.

The evidence of such a man must be looked to with interest; and the result of our researches is most

* So early in the Church of Rome did the system of forming an Index Expurgatorius begin.

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satisfactory. The genuine writings of Leo (his Roman editors themselves being judges of their genuineness) supply no indication whatever of Leo either praying to the Virgin himself, even for her intercession, or being cognizant of any practice of the kind in the Church over which he so long presided.

There are, indeed, two homilies ascribed to Leo, said to have been delivered by him on the feast of the Annunciation, which present very different views.* These, however, are pronounced unhesitatingly by the Roman editor to be beyond all question spurious, and we need not refer to them again. It may still be worthy of remark, that this is another instance of those homilies being proved to be spurious which are said to have been delivered on the feast of the Annunciation before the end of the fifth century. Every additional piece of evidence confirms us in the assurance that the institution of that festival must be referred to a date subsequent to the period put to our present examination.

Among the works of Leo pronounced to be genuine, we have more than ninety discourses or homilies, and upwards of one hundred and seventy epistles, addressed to various individuals or bodies of men, and embracing every variety of subject connected with the doctrine and worship, the principles and practice, of Churches and of private Christians. Of Leo's discourses, ten were delivered on our Lord's Nativity, in every page of which, had he believed and acted as his successors now believe and act, he would have been irresistibly led to give utterance to his feelings towards the Virgin Mary. But his thoughts were fixed on the Saviour himself, and his heart was full of gratitude

* Venice, 1753. Vol. i. pp. 384 and 438.

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and adoring love to God; not on the blessed daughter of Eve, the root of Jesse (as he calls Mary), who was the mother of Him who is God and Man. On the union of the divine and human nature in one person never to be divided, Jesus Christ, God and Man, Son both of God and man, Leo speaks constantly, clearly, and powerfully; so he does on the Virgin-purity of Mary, who brought him forth by wondrous birth. But throughout his sermons, and throughout his epistles, not one word is found which would lead us to infer that he offered religious praises to the Virgin, or invoked her name, or looked to her for any benefits, or supplicated her for her intercession. He is constantly exhorting his hearers and brethren to join him in prayer; but God alone, through Christ alone, is the object of that prayer. In Pope Leo we seek in vain for any countenance to justify the present Pope's profession of confidence in Mary's guidance, and illumination, and protection. Here is no such appeal to the faithful, "That all may have a successful and happy issue, let us raise our eyes to the most blessed Virgin Mary, who alone destroys heresies, who is our greatest hope, yea, the entire ground of our hope." Leo directed his hearers to God alone as the destroyer of the enemies of the truth; as the Christian's greatest and only hope; as the dispenser Himself of every blessing to those who approached him in faithful prayer by his blessed Son; as Himself ready to send down an efficacious blessing on the desires, and plans, and proceedings of his servants, and make his ministers to be as a wall of defence against the invasion of false doctrine. In every one of these particulars Leo's primitive doctrine and practice stand indeed in direct and marked contrast with the sentiments of the pre[illegible]

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sent Pontiff. Almost every discourse will supply an example of this in some one point or other. Pop Leo knew nothing of the Assumption of the Virgin; the legend had not then been framed: but he does again and again invite his fellow-sinners and fellow-believers to rejoice on the most solemn festival of his most blessed Saviour's incarnation.

POPE URBAN, 1833.

1. We select for the date of our letter this most joyful day, in which we celebrate the most solemn festival of the most blessed Virgin's triumph and Assumption into heaven.

2. That she, who has been through every great calamity our patroness and protectress,

3. May watch over us, writing to you, and lead our mind by her heavenly influence to those counsels which may prove most salutary to Christ's flock

POPE LEO, 440.

1. Our Saviour (dearly-beloved) was born to-day; let us rejoice!.. There is no room for sadness. No one is cut off from partaking of this joy; all have one common reason for rejoicing, because our Lord, the destroyer of sin and death, as he found no one free from guilt, so he came to set all free. Let the saint rejoice, because he approaches the palm of victory. Let the sinner rejoice! because he is invited to pardon. Let the Gentile be instructed, because he is called to life (p. 64).

2. God Almighty succouring us through all.—P. 162.

3. I beseech you by the mercies of God assist me by your prayers, that the Holy Spirit may remain in me, and your judgements may not be unstable. To this our exhortation the grace of God is at hand, and gives succour, [5] which by revealing the truth through the world, has destroyed the enemies of Christ's incarnation, and death, and resurrection, so that the faithful in

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POPE URBAN, 1833.	POPE LEO, 440.
	all the world, agreeing with the authority of the Apostolic faith, may rejoice in one joy with ourselves. P. 258.
4. But, that all may have a successful issue, let us raise our eyes to the most blessed Virgin Mary.	4. Let us then fly to the mercy of God, which is everywhere present. P. 166. That your kindness towards me may secure its intended fruit, do you suppliantly implore the most merciful clemency of our God, that he would in our days [5] put to flight those who oppose themselves to us, [7] would fortify our faith, increase our love, increase our peace, and vouchsafe to make me his poor servant (whom, to shew the riches of his grace, he willed to preside at the helm of his Church,) sufficient for so great a work, and useful to your edification... through Jesus Christ our Lord.
5. Who alone destroys all heresies.	
6. Who is our greatest hope; yea, the entire ground of our hope.	6. & 7. The Grace of God, as we hope, will be present, and will enable us, by your prayers, to perform what we have undertaken. P. 242.
7. May she exert her patronage to draw down an efficacious blessing on our desires, our plans, and proceedings, in the present straitened condition of the Lord's flock.	

In Pope Leo we find evidence of implicit trust in God; no confidence in man's merit; but a full and thankful acknowledgment of the salvation obtained by the death of Christ, and made effectual to us by the grace of the Holy Spirit, to be obtained by the earnest prayer of a faithful and obedient Christian. We find indications, indeed, of some rising errors, which were

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soon to invade the integrity of primitive faith: still with him God in Christ is all in all.

The following, which are the closing words of his second sermon on the Nativity, speak of the purity of the Virgin, and of the birth of Christ, as an article of a Christian's creed; but nothing approaching to invocation of her, or confidence in her merits, or hope in her intercession, can be found. "Praise the Lord, well-beloved, in all his works and judgements. Let there be in you a belief, without doubt, of the virgin purity and the birth. With holy and sincere devotedness, honour the sacred and divine mystery of the Restoration of man. Embrace Christ born in our flesh, that you may be accounted worthy to see him as the same God of glory reigning in majesty, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit remaineth in the unity of the Godhead for ever and ever."

Pope Leo knew nothing of hyperdulia: and his testimony brings us far into the third part of the fifth century.

SECTION II.—POPE GELASIUS, A.D. 496.*

Between the death of Leo and the elevation of Gelasius to the See of Rome about thirty years elapsed. The intervening prelates in the imperial city seem to have left few literary works behind them; nor does any author of note appear to have flourished in any part of Christendom during this interval. These Bishops of Rome were Hilarus, A.D. 461; Simplicius, A.D. 467; and Felix, A.D. 483. Hilarus speaks of "the grace of God"† and "the inspiration of

* Sacrosancta Concilia, Paris, 1621, p. 1154. — The pages in this edition of the Councils are confused.

† P. 1042.

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the Lord Jesus Christ" as the source of mercies; and in his time the Council held at Venice speaks of "the Confession of Faith in the Holy Trinity," and of a rising superstition* called "The Lots of the Saints," which the Council denounces; but of the Virgin Mary we read nothing.

In the letters of Simplicius and his correspondents we find continual references to God's mercy as the fountain of hope and blessings; to Christ, as the salvation of the emperor and the strength of his realm;† to the mercy of Christ, as that power which wards off evil, ‡ as the protector of his servants. But there is no mention of the Virgin Mary throughout, of her influence or mediation.

In the letters of Felix though many indications of superstition shew themselves,§ yet no allusion whatever is made to the mediation or intercession, the patronage, power, or influence of the Virgin Mary. The Roman Synod held under him refers to God's power in conquering heresies, and his grace; but they give not the shadow of an intimation that we can obtain that grace by the mediation and intercession of the Virgin. In his letter of admonition and reproof to Peter, Bishop of Antioch, called the Fuller, warning him against the error of representing the divinity of Christ as suffering, Felix dwells at some length on the incarnation of Christ; and he there speaks of the holy purity of the Virgin's womb, when Christ was born of a woman.‖ He does not mention the name of Mary, and he applies the prophetic psalm "Look down from heaven, behold and visit this vine," not, as others have done, to the Virgin, but to the "saving incarnation of the Word." Felix died A.D. 492.

* P. 1057. † P. 1073. ‡ 1074. § P. 1059. ‖ P. 1061.

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SECTION III.

Under Gelasius, who was by birth an African, the Synod of seventy bishops was held which is usually called the First Roman Council. In this council* was passed that decree, which classed the works then most known, and which were comparatively few, under the two heads of approved and forbidden works. Gelasius devoted himself much to the temporal advancement of the Church of Rome, and to its influence and authority over the rest of the world. In a letter addressed to Laurentius, a bishop of Greece, who seems to have solicited his interference, Gelasius prescribes a rule of faith, to which he desired all to conform. In this confession his reference to the Virgin Mary is couched in these words: "We confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God before all ages, without beginning, of the Father as touching his Godhead, in these last times was incarnate, and became perfect Man of the most holy Virgin Mary, possessed of a rational soul and taking a body; of the same substance with the Father as touching his Godhead, and of the same substance with us as touching his humanity. . . . Christ brought not his body from heaven, but received it from our substance; that is, from the Virgin."

In his striking dissertation on Original Sin, and the universal taint and infection of sin, it is impossible that he could have omitted all mention of the Virgin, had the Church of Rome (of which he was on earth the head) then held the Virgin's total immunity from sin, as the present Church of Rome does. We are not here referring to her own immaculate conception in

* P. 1263. † P. 1163.

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the womb of her mother, (which, as being a novelty, St. Bernard reproves the monks of Lyons for maintaining,) but with reference to all immaculate personal and divine purity in herself, such as the authorized services of the Church of Rome, and her accredited teachers, and the devotions of her canonized saints, now set forth. There is much sound and healthful teaching to be found in the scanty remains of this bishop, and on the point immediately before us the following sentiments seem worthy of our notice and admiration. Having reprobated the fundamental error of those who held that man by his own strength and exertions can in this life reach a state of moral and spiritual perfection, Gelasius thus proceeds:*

"But should any one assert that, not by the possibility of human strength, but by divine grace, such a state may in this life be conferred on any holy man, he surely does right to entertain that opinion with confidence, and with faith to cherish that hope. But whether any such have existed who have reached even to this perfection of the present life, as it is nowhere plainly asserted, so does it become us neither readily to affirm, nor to deny it. The more sober course is to determine from the words of the holy Prophets and Apostles themselves (than whom in truth in this world, as far as concerns the course of a holy life, nothing ever was or is more excellent) to what extent we ought to measure our progress in this life. These, although by a more abundant gift of God they were assailed by very rare or very small failings of human nature, and by a fuller affluence of God's grace they easily overcame the vices of mortality, yet themselves testify that they were not wholly free from them; so

* P. 1240.

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that it BELONGS ALONE to that immaculate Lamb to have no sin at all; otherwise that might seem not to be imputed to him alone, if ANY holy one besides should be thought free from sin. Let us then be content with the confession of the saints, and let us rather hear whatever they affirm concerning themselves, than pursue what may be either rashly entertained in our thoughts, or blown about by our own opinions."

Could such sentiments, without any exception or modification, have been written by Gelasius, had the Virgin Mary been habitually an object of his contemplation as a mortal without sin? Both Gelasius and Leo speak of Christ as having found no one mortal without sin when he came to redeem all; no exception whatever being made in favour of the Virgin Mary.

In a letter to Rusticus, Bishop of Lyons, having spoken of the storms of evil which pressed him, and the trials of affliction by which he was overwhelmed, he, like his predecessor Leo, makes no mention of the Virgin, her power and influence, her intercession, her guidance and watchful care: his heart (as far as language can be an index of the heart) speaks only of God. "But we faint not, and amidst so many pressures neither does my mind sink, nor my zeal slacken, nor does fear cast me down; but, though in straits and perplexities, we place our confidence in him who will with the temptations provide a way for escape; and who, though for a time he will allow us to be depressed, yet will not suffer us to be overwhelmed."* This letter was written in A.D. 494; after which he held the second Roman Council A.D. 495, and in the November of the next year he died. This brings us within four years of the end of the first five hundred years from the birth of Christ. Certainly in Gelasius, the Bishop and Pope of Rome,

* P. 1259.

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we see not the shadow of any worship of the Virgin at all; nothing, in faith or practice, corresponding with the present belief and practice of the Church of Rome, either as held and exemplified in himself, or as existing, to his knowledge, in any part of the Catholic Church of Christ.

SECTION IV.— ANASTASIUS AND SYMMACHUS.

Gelasius was succeeded by Anastasius II.; and Anastasius, who presided over the Roman Church a few days short of two years, was followed by Symmachus, whose life extended fourteen years beyond the period by which our present investigation is limited.

In the scanty remains of these two Popes not one single expression occurs from which we could infer that the invocation of the Virgin Mary, or any faith in her merits and influence, was known to them; yet, when speaking of the divine and human nature of our Lord, they would have found abundant room for references to her heavenly influence, had the habitual associations of their minds led that way. Such references were continually made in after-ages. Invariably, however, these Pontiffs refer to God alone, the first and immediate Giver of every good gift; and "their chief hope, yea, the entire ground of their hope," their own and their correspondents', is not the Virgin, but Christ. Instead of declaring her to be "the sole destroyer of heresies," they hope in God that he will defend his truth by his own mighty power and silence the oppositions, and upbraidings, and corruptions of its enemies. Anastasius in his letter of gratulation to Clovis, King of the French, who had just professed Christianity and been baptized in the true faith, referring the king's spiritual birth to God

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as the effecter, thus admonishes him: "Therefore, glorious and illustrious son, give joy to thy mother [the Church], and be to her a pillar of iron; for the love of many is waxing cold, and by the cunning of evil men our barque is tossed by the billows and beaten by the foaming waves. But we hope, for hope and against hope, and praise the Lord, who hath rescued thee from the power of darkness, and hath provided for the Church so great a prince, who may be able to defend it, and to put on the helmet of salvation against the invading attempts of the baneful. Go on then, beloved son, that God Almighty may preserve thy peace and kingdom with his heavenly protection, and give his angels charge to keep thee in all his [? thy] ways, and give to thee victory over thy enemies round about."

In the letter of Anastasius to his namesake Anastasius the Emperor, we are struck by his continual recurrence to the Scripture, both of the Old and the New Testament, for authority in support of his positions.

In the Letter of Defence written by Symmachus against the Emperor Anastasius, who had been excommunicated, he thus speaks of Christ's divine and human nature: "Christ is truly, wholly God, and wholly man; so was he conceived, so lived in the world, so suffered, so descended into hell, so was raised again, so appeared with his disciples, so exalted into heaven, and so is it said that he will come again, and so is he at this day in heaven."*

* P. 1297.

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To the Bishops of Africa, Symmachus caused this to be written (there is a doubt whether he wrote it himself, or used a deacon as an amanuensis): "God will happily accomplish the rewards of your confession, when it shall please him to restore rest to the Churches; that He may, by the sweetness of peace, console us for the sorrow which adversity brought upon us."

"Is this done" (he says) "from the love of life, or from the love of souls, in imitation of their first Shepherd, our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, OUR HOPE, who laid down his life for the sheep?"*

To Cæsarius, writing on the restoration of peace to the Church, he says: "And if by the help of God the risen controversy shall be stayed, let us ascribe that to his merits."†

Thus we find that Bishops of Rome up to the end of the fifth century (and how much longer the limits put to our investigation do not admit of our inquiry), who were, as we learn from their own representations, similarly circumstanced with the present reigning Pontiff, instead of lifting their eyes to the Virgin Mary as their hope, as the destroyer of heresies, as the guide and preserver of the Lord's ministers, spoke only of God as the author of truth, and peace, and wisdom, and safety; and looked for temporal and spiritual blessings to Him alone, without the intervention of any patronage, mediation, influence, power, or intercession of the blessed Virgin Mary.

Symmachus died in A.D. 514.

* P. 1301. † P. 1308.

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CONCLUSION.

We have now brought our proposed labour to a close. We have seen that, in the Church of Rome, prayer unequivocal and direct is addressed to the Virgin Mary for her intercession, and for her patronage, and assistance, and spiritual graces; we have seen that God is petitioned to grant the requests of those who pray to Him, for the sake of Mary, through her merits and intercession; we have seen that spiritual praises are offered to her for past benefits, and hymns are sung to her glory; we find that believers are taught to depend upon her as the anchor of their souls, and to devote themselves by a solemn act of religion to her service as the Queen of Heaven, the Spouse of God. The pattern and principles and fundamental ground of all this worship we find fully and unquestionably existing in the appointed offices, the authorized and prescribed services, of the Roman Ritual; whilst the excesses and extravagancies of the worship of the Virgin we see in the works of doctrine and devotion of her votaries, canonized saints, and accredited teachers. We accuse not our brethren in the Church of Rome of idolatry or heresy; though we should in our own consciences be guilty of both, were we to associate any created being with Almighty God as the object of our prayer, or with our blessed Saviour as our mediator and intercessor. We condemn not others; to their own Master they stand or fall: but, being per-

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suaded in our own mind that we should act in direct opposition to God's own teaching if we were to pray to the Virgin, or to pray to God in her name, pleading her advocacy, and trusting to her merits; we at once protest against the fundamental errors of that Church, which justifies, and enjoins, and requires, on pain of excommunication, such worship to be paid to the Virgin, as in our consciences we consider to invade the province of Almighty God, the Giver of all good, and the province of Jesus Christ our Saviour, the only Mediator between God and man.

To assure ourselves on these essential points, we have searched the Holy Scripture; and from its first to its last page we find not one iota or tittle to suggest, or sanction, or admit of such divine worship being offered to the Virgin Mary, but much every way to discountenance and forbid it. And to assure ourselves that we understand the inspired volume as our forefathers in Christ received it from the first; that what we hold on this point was the tenet of the primitive Church; and that what we dread as a fundamental error was introduced by the corruptions of superstition in more recent ages; we have examined, not lightly or for a shew of argument, but patiently, and uprightly, and to the utmost of our ability and means, the remains of Christian antiquity. We have especially searched into the writings of those whose works, A.D. 492, received the approbation of the Bishop and the Council of Rome; we have diligently sought for evidence in the records of the early Councils; and we find all, not for a few years, or in a portion of Christendom, but for five hundred years and more, and in every country in the Eastern and in the Western empire, in Europe, in Africa, and in Asia, testifying as

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with one voice that they knew of no belief in the present power of the Virgin and her influence with God; no practice in public or private of praying to God through her mediation, or of invoking her for her good offices of intercession, and advocacy, and patronage; no offering of thanks and praise made to her; no ascription of divine honour and glory to her name. On the contrary, all the writers through those ages testify that God was to the early Christians the only object of prayer; that to them Christ was the only heavenly mediator and intercessor in whom they put their trust.

The revealed truths of the Bible, and the witnesses of the Christian Church, warn us, as with a voice from heaven, never to substitute Mary for Christ, not even for a moment, not by the most transient appeal to God in her name; never to seek what we need, as souls on our way to God, from any source but the Almighty, the first cause of all things, the giver of every good gift, the God of all comfort, the only rock of our salvation, the only ground of our hope; and to pour out our hearts before him alone, through his only Son alone, who is the way, the truth, and the life.

We honour Mary, we love her memory, we would by God's grace follow her example in faith and humility, meekness and obedience; we bless God for the wonderful work of salvation, in effecting which she was a chosen vessel; we call her a blessed Saint, and a holy Virgin; we cannot doubt of her eternal happiness through the merits of Him, who was God of the substance of his Father begotten before the world, and Man of the substance of his mother born in the world. But we cannot address religious praises to her; we cannot trust in her merits, or intercession,

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or advocacy for our acceptance with God; we cannot invoke her for any blessing temporal or spiritual; we cannot pray to God through her intercession or for it: this in us would be sin. We pray to God alone; we offer religious praise, our spiritual sacrifices, to God alone; we trust in God alone; we need no other mediator, we seek no other mediator, we apply to no other mediator, intercessor, or advocate in the unseen world but Jesus Christ alone, the Son of God and Man. In this faith we implore God alone, for the sake only of his Son, to keep us stedfast unto death; and in the full assurance of the belief that this faith is founded upon the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, we will endeavour, by God's blessing, to preserve it, as our Church now professes it, whole and undefiled, and to deliver it down without spot or stain of superstition to our children's children as their best inheritance for ever.

We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts, that as we have known the incarnation of thy Son, Jesus Christ, by the message of an angel, so by his cross and passion we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty God, who hast given to us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him and to be born of a pure Virgin; grant that we, being regenerate and made thy children by adoption and grace,

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may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit, through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

It is meet, right, and our bounden duty that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God; because thou didst give Jesus Christ, thine only Son, to be born for us, who by the operation of the Holy Ghost was made very Man, of the substance of the Virgin Mary his mother, and that without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin. Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord Most High! Amen.

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APPENDIX A.

THE reader, even by the perusal of this work, will have become aware of the great difficulties which all who would ascertain the real views of the early Christians must encounter, in consequence of the reckless manner in which supposititious works have been ascribed to the saints and most esteemed writers of the primitive Church. We have often been distressed on finding modern writers making references to works which competent judges have long since condemned as spurious, and citing them in evidence as genuine productions. But the most perplexing cases of all occur when persons of note and authority cite the testimony of the ancient Fathers without giving any clue to the works in which the testimony is contained. Of this we find very striking instances in the works of a writer to whom we have already referred, Alphonsus Liguori, to two or three of which it is thought safer that we advert in this place.

Alphonsus Liguori is, in the estimation of Roman Catholic divines, an authority of no ordinary value. Dr. Wiseman speaks of him as "a venerable man," "a pattern and a light," "whose life and writings inspire us (he says) with an admiration scarcely surpassed by that which we feel towards the early lights of the Church;" and in Ireland his work called "The Glories of Mary" is recommended as a manual for all the faithful. We consider him, therefore, as speaking the sentiments not only of the Court

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of Rome, and of the Pope who so lately canonized him, but especially also of the bishops and clergy of Rome ministering at present in these islands. The following passages, with numberless others of the same character, occur in that work:

"Before him (Bonaventura) St. Ignatius had pronounced that a sinner can be saved ONLY by having recourse to the blessed Virgin, whose INFINITE mercy obtains salvation for those who would be condemned by infinite justice. Some pretend that the text is not taken from Ignatius, but we know that St. Chrysostom attributes it to him."*

"With what efficacy, with what tender charity, does not Mary plead our cause! From the consideration thereof, St. Augustine says to her, 'Men have but one sole advocate in heaven, and it is you, Holy Virgin.'"†

"Poor sinners! how lamentable would be your lot if you had not this powerful advocate! this advocate so wise, so prudent, and so tender, that her Son CANNOT condemn those whom she defends."‡

"The glorious St. Gatian affirms, that, though we may ask as many graces as we please, we cannot obtain them but through the intercession of Mary. St. Antoninus says, 'To ask favours without interposing Mary, is to attempt to fly without wings.'"§

"Mary, says St. Chrysostom, has been elected from all eternity as Mother of God, that she may save by HER mercy those to whom her Son in justice cannot grant pardon."‖

These are not the sentiments of persons who lived centuries ago, or of persons like those whose excesses

* Dublin, 1843, p. 190. † P. 170. ‡ P. 171.
§ P. 154. ‖ P. 179.

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Theophilus Raynaud wrote his book to check and discountenance; they are the sentiments of one who has been dead only fifty-six years, and to whose teaching the highest authority in the Church of Rome, only five years since, set its seal by its most solemn act of all — even his canonization. And what is the doctrine here proclaimed and spread through the world? That the mercy of Mary is infinite, and obtains salvation for those whom God in his infinite justice would condemn: That Jesus, whose own gracious lips assure us that the merciful God and Father of us all sent him into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved, whatever be his will, CANNOT condemn those whom she defends: Though the blessed book of truth assures us that we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is also the propitiation for our sins, yet here we are told that the Virgin is our sole advocate in heaven. Whilst the Lord Jesus declares, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do,"* "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you;"† this Saint of the Roman Church tells us, we may ask what we will, but that without Mary's intercession we can obtain no grace: Whereas the warrant of the covenant of grace is, that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, and that in him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins; here we are taught that Mary is to save by HER mercy those to whom her Son cannot in justice grant pardon.

These are indeed very startling positions, lamentable departures from the truth as it is in Jesus: and when we find an appeal made to St. Ignatius, St.

* John xiv. 13. † John xvi. 23.

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Chrysostom, and St. Augustine, in defence of these doctrines, we may not conceal our feelings of astonishment and sorrow. For the authorities here cited by Liguori most diligent and repeated search has been made, and not a trace of either of them can be found. In no one of the works attributed to St. Ignatius, can any allusion to such a position be discovered. And though Liguori says, "We know that St. Chrysostom attributes the text to Ignatius," every other part of St. Chrysostom, as well as his work on the life and character of St. Ignatius, have been ransacked for any allusion to such a statement, but in vain. For the testimony also here directly drawn from St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine, their works have been searched with unremitting scrutiny, but with the same result. Not a shadow of any such doctrine can be detected. In neither of these, nor in St. Ignatius, is there found any the most distant allusion to the mercy, the intercession, or the advocacy and saving power of Mary. Their uniform teaching is, that the eternal Father is infinite in mercy, and will freely pardon believing penitents who come to him by his ever-merciful Son.

APPENDIX B.

GREGORY THAUMATURGUS.

THE discourses which Vossius published among this early writer's works, were, he says,* found by himself in a very ancient MS. belonging to the convent of Cryptoferrata, near Rome, which he compared with the Vatican MS., and also with that of Cardinal

* P. 109.

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Sirletus. The discourses purport to have been delivered in honour of the Virgin on the festival of the Annunciation; and Vossius enumerates other discourses contained in the same manuscript delivered by illustrious men, among which he specifies that sermon, ascribed to St. Athanasius, which the Benedictine editors, and Baronius before them, have pronounced to be beyond question spurious, and probably a production of the seventh century.

Neither does Jerome in his enumeration of the works of this Gregory, nor any other ancient writer, allude to these discourses. Cardinal Bellarmin * indeed himself unhesitatingly rejects as spurious two of the new works ascribed to this Gregory by Vossius, on the ground that they had been written with a view to heresies which were not known in the Church till long after the time of Gregory; and, when speaking of these very discourses, he says, "Of them I entertain no certain opinion, for the ancients have made no mention of the works; and yet it cannot be proved that they are supposititious."

These discourses profess to have been delivered by this Gregory on the festival of the Annunciation, whereas that festival was not observed in the Church for many ages after his death.

In the "Acta Sanctorum," indeed, the institution of this festival is ascribed to the Virgin herself, who, as the legend says, every year observed this day; the Apostles afterwards appointing it to be observed for ever in gratitude to the Virgin. But the earliest authority cited in that work are these very discourses, ascribed now to Gregory.

* Vol. vii., De Scriptor. Eccles.

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Alban Butler says that Pope Gelasius alludes to this festival; the passage has been carefully sought for, but in vain: and even had Gelasius referred to it, that would have been two centuries and a half after Gregory's time. Bellarmin, tenaciously maintaining the antiquity of this festival, cites the oration said to have been delivered upon it by Athanasius; the very oration which he himself, and Baronius, and the Benedictines pronounce to be spurious; and which Baronius refers to the seventh century.

Reference has been made to St. Augustine in proof of the festival having been observed in his day: even that would be more than two centuries later than this Gregory's time. But Augustine does not, in the passage cited,* allude to any festival at all; only saying that the Church believed the tradition that Christ was conceived on the 25th of March, reckoning backward from his birth.

In Spain, this festival was ordered by a Council at Toledo to be observed eight days before Christmas, but this was so late as A. D. 656; afterwards the Spanish Church kept both their own day and the 25th of March. But whilst the existence of this festival in the time of Gregory Thaumaturgus rests on no evidence whatever, the proof that it was not observed till the commencement of the seventh century is conclusive.

By the ancient rules of the Church, all festivals and commemorations, even of the martyrs, were forbidden in Lent, except the Saturday and the Lord's day. This is enacted in the Council of Laodicea,† held in the

* De Trinitate, Lib. iv. c. 9, vol. viii. p. 816.

† The date of the Council of Laodicea is not precisely known: some writers refer it to A. D. 357; others, to a time ten years later.

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middle of the fourth century,* without any exception of the Annunciation: whereas, in the Council held at Constantinople in the palace of the Emperor, and thence called Concilium in Trullo, the same prohibition was re-enacted; only, the feast of the Annunciation was then made an exception. This Council was held A. D 692.†

These homilies have been pronounced by many celebrated critics to be spurious, among whom are Cave and Dupin:‡ and Lumper§ at some length proves them to be of a much later date.

But Vossius put off the character of a judge, and acted like a partizan; his professed devotedness to the worship of the Virgin converting his editorial preface into a rhapsody. He dedicates the edition to "the Mother of God, the blessed Mary ever Virgin, and to Saint Gregory;" and the following are among the variously combined acts of worship addressed chiefly to Mary, while some of them are addressed to Gregory as her servant.

He thus begins: "My mind is astounded, my memory fails, my utterance languishes, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws, whilst I strive to celebrate the heraldings of thy praise, O most holy Virgin, Mother of God, Mary! and hold before my mind the mirror of thy heroic virtues."

"Here I will make an end; and I pray and beseech thee, O Gregory! together with the most glorious and most holy Mother of God, Mary the Virgin, that ye will at all times undertake the patronage of me, that ye will join your prayers with mine, and never cease to inter-

* Labbe, vol. i. p. 1505. † Ibid. vol. vi. p. 1165.

‡ See Bingham, Book xx. chap. viii § 4.

§ Lumper, Part xiii. p. 313.

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cede for me with the most merciful God, that THROUGH YOU, after this frail, sad, and short life ended, I may be deemed worthy to reach the life truly blessed and eternal." "Hail, Mother, the heaven, the Virgin, the throne, and of our Church the honour and glory and strength! Hail, thou, the comfort and ready help of those in danger and who have recourse to thee! Hail, refuge of sinners, hope of all the good and afflicted, the fountain of grace and of ALL COMFORT!* Hail, best mediatrix between Christ and man! Hail, sure and unfailing protection of us all! Hail, ONLY relief of the troubles and disturbances of this life! Hail, ONLY hope of the desponding, succour of the oppressed, and present help of those who fly to thee! Hail, gate and key of heaven's kingdom, the ladder and the way upwards of all the elect! To thee we cry: remember us, O most holy Mother and Virgin! remember, I say; and, in RETURN FOR THESE ENCOMIUMS AND EULOGIES, GIVE US BACK great gifts out of the riches of thy so abundant graces. To thee we sigh, that in all our troubles and difficulties thou wouldest benignantly and promptly succour us."

It is no longer matter of wonder, that such a man should be anxious to make so early a writer as Gregory Thaumaturgus the author of homilies in honour of the Virgin, when we find him praying for great gifts from

* If we compare these words in the original Latin with the words of St. Paul in the Latin Vulgate (the version of the Scriptures most familiar to Vossius), when the Apostle speaks of our heavenly Father as the God of all comfort:—to every scholar they must seem most strikingly identifiable. Vossius addresses Mary as "Fons totius consolationis." St. Paul says of God, "Deus totius consolationis." Equally painful is it to find, in the next sentence, Mary called "the only Hope, the only Relief, the Way to the Place on high." Compare John, xiv. 6.

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her abundant treasures, expressly in return for the abundance of his collaudations of her: but it is matter of wonder, that such homilies should be appealed to, now, as genuine; though they had never been published or enumerated among his works, or referred to as his, whether extant or lost, or even heard of for at least thirteen hundred years.

APPENDIX C.

GREGORY OF NAZIANZUM.

THE TRAGEDY CALLED "CHRIST SUFFERING."

THE statement of the Parisian editor, M. Caillau, priest of the Society of Mercy, called The Blessed Mary Immaculate in her Conception, embodying his reasons for pronouncing this work spurious, is as follows:*

"Whilst I was very carefully reflecting on the manuscripts of the Benedictines, which Providence had placed in my hand, one only seemed to be wanting, namely, their sentiments on the tragedy called 'Christ Suffering;' and I felt this the more, because a question of a religious no less than a literary interest is involved in it. But, for curing this defect, an abundant supply was at hand of men the most skilled in every branch of criticism who have ever lived down to the present time. For, that this tragedy is not to be ascribed to [Gregory] the Theologist, there agree with

* Greg. Theologi. Paris, 1840. Edit. M. Caillau, Priest of the Society of Mercy, called The Blessed Mary Immaculate in her Conception.—The first volume was published in Paris in the year 1778 Vol. ii. p. 1205.

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one voice Tillemont,* Dupin,† Baillet, Jugement des Savants,‡ Baronius,§ Rivet,‖ Vossius,¶ Bellarmin,** Labbe,†† and after them, Ceillier."‡‡

"Now these are the arguments on which this judgement, which can scarcely be set aside, is built. In the first place, all the old manuscripts are silent as to the author's name; and only one manuscript is adduced which has the name of the Theologist, and one other of Suidas, neither very old nor of much importance, where this tragedy is appended to the works of St. Gregory. Secondly,§§ There is not found in the said work that purity of doctrine which all admire in the other poems, epistles, and orations of the Theologist. For here the most holy Virgin is at one time offended by the news of her Son's murder; at another, cast down by an unworthy fear, whereas, according to the saying of St. Ambrose, 'The mother stood before the cross, and, when the men fled, she stood intrepid;' at another, indulging to excess in sighs and groans, though the same holy doctor says of her, 'I read of her standing —of her weeping, I do not read;" at another, seized at length by a mad fury, and attacking her Son's enemies with most severe injuries, so as moreover to imprecate on them every calamity. To this add, that the

* Tom. ix. p. 559.
† Tom. ii. pp. 372 and 651.
‡ Tom. iv. part ii. p. 457.
§ Tom. i. ad ann. 34, [p. 157,] § 129.
‖ Critic. Sac. p. 343.
¶ Instit. Poetic. lib. ii. c. 14, p. 72.
** De Script. Eccles.
†† De Script. Eccles.

‡‡ Hist. des Aut. Sac. tom. vii. p. 176.—The author has verified all these references. Fabricius has been lately quoted as acknowledging the genuineness of the work in question. But, he only rejects the notion of its having been written by Apollinaris, and in the same page tells us that Lipsius and even Vossius doubted, and that Triller and Valcken undertook to demonstrate that it was spurious.

§§ Hamburgh, vol. viii. p. 429.

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author, drawing from apocryphal sources accounts undoubtedly false, says that the holy Virgin was brought up by the hands of an angel, and was delivered by the whole senate as a wife to a modest husband; that Christ appeared to his most holy mother immediately after his resurrection; that many churches were at that time erected to the honour of the blessed Virgin, and solemn festivals celebrated,—which seems not to have been done till about the middle of the fifth century, after the decree published at Ephesus in the year 431.* Thirdly, In this drama you will seek in vain for St. Gregory's elegance of style and varied colouring; moreover, his dignity of language, and correctness of metre,† and abundance of similitudes; by all of which the other poems of the blessed doctor are adorned: whence it is clear that this poem is NOT TO BE ASCRIBED TO HIM." The same editor thinks it not improbable that it was written by Gregory of Antioch towards the close of the sixth century.

To this judgement we wish to add nothing: there can be no doubt of its general soundness. We cannot, however, but observe, that it is drawn up by an editor who, so far from disparaging the Virgin Mary, is repeatedly led into mistakes by his zealous anxiety to do her honour. Curious instances of this appear in his index. Under the head of Mary, for example, he says, "Mary, a support of women;" whilst in the passage referred to,

* Churches dedicated to God were from very early times called by the names of Martyrs and Saints, and among others, by the name of Mary. But we find no trace of any festival celebrated in honour of Mary, till long after the close of the fifth century. See pp. 95, 113, 157, 372, &c., of this work.

† Leuenkius pronounces that in this poem no regard is paid to the laws of Iambic verse, which were accurately observed by Gregory.—See Appendix to vol. ii. Paris edition of Gregory.

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whatever be its meaning, Gregory applies the word, not to Mary, but to his own mother, Nonna,* whom he describes as "shining now with Susanna, Mary, and the Annas." If the Mary here mentioned by Gregory means the blessed Virgin, he mingles her without any distinction with the others. Again, the editor says, "Mary, inferior to Christ, but superior to all others;" whereas, in the poem to which the reference is made, Mary's inferiority to Christ is asserted in conjunction with all others in heaven and in earth, but not one word is said about her superiority to all others.† We can only again express our surprise that a work so unquestionably spurious as the Tragedy in question, should be boldly quoted in the present day, without an allusion to any doubt being entertained as to its genuineness.

APPENDIX D.

HOMILY OF GREGORY OF NAZIANZUM, THE THEOLOGIAN.

In examining this homily with the view of forming a correct judgement as to its genuineness, we must bear in mind what was the character of the author to whom it is ascribed. He was one of the most learned bishops of the Church, and one whose mind had been stored with all the knowledge which the most celebrated schools could impart. He had studied in other famous seats of learning, and especially at Alexandria, and at Athens. Could he have been the author of a homily filled with so many gross mistakes and inconsistencies, and confusion of facts and persons? The

* Vol. ii. p. 1134; Carm. lxix. † Vol. ii. p. 336.

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question deserves a patient and full examination. The alternative is of no slight importance; if we maintain the genuineness of the oration, then this great teacher and Theologist is convicted of gross mistakes, inconsistent with the range of his learning and knowledge; and if the glaring inconsistencies and ignorance pervading the homily compel us to pronounce against its genuineness, then this testimony to the early prevalence of invocations to Mary (which, slight as it is at the best, is acknowledged by the Benedictine editors* to be the clearest and most explicit which the fourth century can produce,) must be given up.

In the first place, then, nothing is known of the time, or place, or occasion of the delivery of this oration. The notice of Nicetas, which stands as the heading of the homily in the Paris edition of 1611, states that it was spoken to the people of Nazianzum, Gregory's usual place of residence, the day after the festival of St. Cyprian, on the orator's return from the warm baths at the foot of the precipitous mountain near the town; which he frequented, partly for the comfort of retirement, and partly for the cure of an infirmity under which he laboured. But the Benedictine editors reject this supposition altogether, because the orator addresses the audience as persons with whom he had been only a short time acquainted; and they maintain that the oration was delivered at Constantinople, A.D. 379.

Secondly, The Cyprian, in collaudation of whom the orator delivered this panegyric, and on whose licentiousness and vice, and magical arts, and violence towards the virgin Justina, he was speaking, was St. Cyprian, the renowned Bishop of Carthage; whereas all the editors and

* Vol. i. p. 437.

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critics, with one voice, pronounce such a stigma upon St. Cyprian's character to be a calumny which must not for a moment be allowed to attach itself to that holy man's name. Thus Dr. Wiseman speaks of "the machinations of the magician Cyprian," without any allusion to the Saint of Carthage. But whoever were the orator, that the subject of his discourse was St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, admits of no doubt. The words of the orator, variously and again and again repeated, fix the identity of the individual subject of his panegyric beyond question. Thus, in one passage, he says, "This Cyprian, my friends,—that those of you who know it may be the more pleased by the remembrance, and those who know it not may learn the fairest of all our histories, and the common glory of Christians,—is that man, the great name formerly of the Carthaginians, but now of the whole world." Again, he says, "He not only presided over the Church of the Carthaginians or of Africa (from him and on account of him celebrated to the present day), but also the whole West, and almost the very East, and the South and the North, wherever fame reached. Thus Cyprian becomes ours."

Now, Baronius* affirms, that this was a mistake in the orator; that the anecdote must have related to some other Cyprian; and that, as for St. Cyprian of Carthage, the story which charges him with having used magical arts is a fable to be exploded. Can we consider Gregory the Theologian, who was the most learned man of his time, and who had himself studied in

* Baronius, Martyr. 26 Sept. p. 376, Paris, 1607; and Annal. Eccles. vol. ii. p. 564. Anno Christi 250. "Explosa fabula illa de Cypriani magicâ arte."

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Africa, to have fallen into such a mistake, and to have been the propagator of such a fable?

Thirdly, The orator,* in a manner totally at variance with Gregory's, states that, "if used with faith, the very ashes of Cyprian dislodged devils, expelled diseases, foretold things to come; as they know who have made the experiment, and have delivered the account down to us, and will deliver it for times to come."

Fourthly, To abridge the tale in the words of the Benedictine editor, the orator † asserts that the body of Cyprian, having been hidden by a pious woman, was for a long time concealed, and was brought to light by a revelation made to another woman. Whereas the "Acts of the Proconsulate" ‡ tell us distinctly that the body of St. Cyprian, after he was beheaded, was carried at night, by torch-light, to the burying-place of Macrobius on the Massalian way, near the fishponds, with many prayers and exultations. §

Fifthly, the orator asserts that the persecution, by which the Cyprian of whom he speaks was first banished and then beheaded, was under Decius, who was bent on destroying so eminent a Christian; whereas Cyprian of Carthage, though banished in the Decian persecution, yet returned from exile, and, after some years of labour in his episcopate, suffered martyrdom about A.D. 259, at the close of Valerian's reign.

Sixthly, Whilst it is with one voice denied that the Cyprian to whose memory the stain of attempting Justina's seduction could be the Bishop of Carthage, many of the circumstances specified by the

* P. 449. † P. 448.

‡ See Benedictine edition of Cyprian.

§ Cyprian, Paris, 1726, cxlvii.

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orator as belonging to the subject of his eulogy correspond precisely with the acknowledged facts of that Saint Cyprian's life.* Cyprian's biographer was Pontus, his own deacon, who witnessed his martyrdom; and what he tells us of the birth, station, learning, wealth, liberality, and the death of his master, coincides exactly with the description in this panegyric. The circumstance, too, beautifully told by the orator, of his Cyprian having written many letters to encourage and comfort his people under their persecution, which both the memoir of Pontus and St. Cyprian's letters, still extant, prove to have belonged to the Bishop of Carthage, leaves no doubt as to the person whom the Orator considered himself to be describing. Whereas, on the other hand, the stories detailed by the orator of the man practising the arts of magic and summoning the devil to his aid in the work of seduction, and then destroying his books, and then being converted by Justina, whose chastity he had attempted, are all irreconcileable with the facts of the life of St. Cyprian of Carthage, who was himself a married man before his conversion, who was converted in his fiftieth year by his friend Cæcilius the presbyter, and who, instead of disgracing himself by magic, engaged in the pursuits of literature and practised every moral virtue. The orator declares, that the person of whom he spoke was Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, the glory of the Catholic Church: the question recurs, Could Gregory of Nazianzum have been that orator?

Seventhly, To avoid the scandal of leaving such imputations on the character of the great Cyprian,

* There is much difficulty in fixing these dates with minute exactness; but allowing for all the varieties of reckoning, the inconsistencies and anachronisms in this oration remain unaffected.

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commentators tell us that not he, but Cyprian of Nicomedia was the person meant by the orator. But, should we entertain that suggestion, the oration becomes involved in other inconsistencies. The orator says, that his Cyprian was beheaded under Decius, who died about A. D. 251; whereas no account fixes the martyrdom of Cyprian of Nicomedia at an earlier date than the reign of Diocletian and Maximinian, which did not commence till after the lapse of more than thirty years from the death of Decius.

Eighthly, Supposing the orator to mean Cyprian of Nicomedia, then he is altogether mistaken as to the kind of death suffered by the martyr. He says it was by the sword severing the head from the body (the real mode of the martyrdom of Cyprian of Carthage); whereas Cyprian of Nicomedia, together with his fellow-martyr Justina, was burnt on an instrument of torture called the gridiron, or frying-pan.

Ninthly, If Cyprian of Nicomedia be the subject of the orator's panegyric, then the story of the body having been hidden by one woman, and revealed to another, is no less inapplicable to him, than, on the other supposition, it would be to Cyprian of Carthage.* We are expressly told that the corpse of the martyr was exposed to be devoured by wild beasts, but that some Christian sailors carried it away by night and bore it to Rome, whence it was removed to Constantinople, and buried in the basilica, near the baptistry.

The passage, lastly, in which the orator tells us that one woman concealed, and another discovered the remains of Cyprian, contains a very extraordinary sentence, by no means to be overlooked in our present

* See Baronius, Martyr. Sept. 26, p. 376.

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inquiry, as to the author of this oration. The reading may, perhaps, be a corruption, but it stands thus:— "That the woman might also be purified; as THOSE WOMEN who both before gave birth to Christ, and told his disciples after his resurrection from the dead, so now also the one woman shewing, the other giving up Cyprian."*

With these instances before us of the confusion, and contradictions, and inconsistencies which pervade this oration throughout, we cannot allow it to be the genuine production of so eminent and learned a divine as Gregory of Nazianzum. We cannot conceive that a bishop so deeply imbued with literature in all its branches, sacred and secular, doctrinal and historical, could have delivered an oration which professes in the plainest language, and by various expressions, to be a panegyric on that Cyprian who was the renowned prelate of Carthage, the glory of Africa and the world, and yet which is pervaded with a tissue of inconsistencies and contradictions, biographical and historical, from its first to its last page. This, however, is confessed to be the clearest testimony which the fourth century provides of the invocation of the Virgin.

APPENDIX E.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.

THAT the two homilies referred to in the text, and now ascribed to Cyril, (palpably different versions of the same original,) are the productions of a later age, can

* Ὥσπερ τὸν Χριστὸν καὶ τεκοῦσαι πρότερον.

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scarcely admit of the least doubt. That the homily quoted by Dr. Wiseman is a corrupt copy, whoever was its author, we learn even from Aubert himself, who first added it to Cyril's works. That editor informs us that he copied it out from a most faulty (mendacissimo) manuscript in the King's Library (Paris), and emended it as well as he could, by guesses. He tells us, also, that it will prove itself to any one at a glance to be the genuine offspring of Cyril: assigning, as his proof, "that the author of the homily inveighs against Nestorius; and also, by a most clear testimony, calls Celestinus Archbishop OF THE WHOLE WORLD."

Celestinus was Bishop of Rome when the Council of Ephesus was convened; and among the monuments of that council many letters are recorded, some from Cyril to Celestinus, some from Celestinus to Cyril, and some from each of those bishops to others, with the epistles of other bishops to them. Now, so far from Cyril acknowledging Celestinus to be Archbishop of the whole world, in his letter to Nestorius he speaks of Celestinus as Bishop, indeed, of Great Rome, but still as his fellow-minister, and brother, and fellow-bishop;* and he addresses him just as he does the Bishop of Constantinople: "Cyril, to the most holy father and most dear to God, Celestinus;" "Cyril, to the most holy and sacred lord archbishop and father, Maximianus." And Cyril is thus addressed by Celestinus: "Celestinus, to his beloved brother, Cyril." Celestinus, in one letter, adds, "The same we have written to our holy brothers and fellow-bishops, John [Antioch], Juvenal [Jerusalem], Flavian [Constanti-

* ἀδελφοῦ καὶ συλλειτουργοῦ ἡμῶν: again, *συνεπίσκοπον ἡμῶν.*

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nople]," &c. And he urges Cyril to induce Nestorius to confess the same faith "which the Roman Church holds, and the Church of your holiness [Alexandria] holds," &c. Paul, Bishop of Emesa, thus addressed Cyril: "To my lord, the most holy and sacred archbishop, Cyril." And John, Bishop of Antioch, addresses in the same terms Xystus, Bishop of Rome, Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, and Maximianus, Bishop of Constantinople, as "his most holy brethren."

But whoever was the author, the homily in point of evidence is of no value. It might with equal reason be cited by a pagan in defence of his addressing an invocation to a thing that never had life. "Hail, thou City of the Ephesians, — rather, Goddess of the Sea;* because, instead of earthly harbours, angelical and heavenly harbours are come to thee! And hail, thou thrice-blessed John, Apostle and Evangelist! and hail, thou, too, Mary, who didst bear God!" In the body of the homily, the preacher certainly "attributes to Mary the works of Christ;" ascribing to her, among other works of the only Saviour, the salvation of every believing soul: "Hail Mary, parent of God, through whom every spirit that believes is saved!" The close of the other version of the same homily, which is found also in vol. iv. of the General Councils, p. 1251, as it now stands, is a mass of confusion; in which, nevertheless, whatever be the author's meaning, he declares that, when he praises Mary, it is the Church he is praising: "Praising the ever-Virgin

* It is difficult to know how to render this expression μαλλον δε θαλασσοθεα. The Latin of Aubert renders it, "Novo maris prospectu ornatior." Mr. Palmer (Letter V. to Dr. Wiseman, p. 27), translates it, "more than sea-beholding." It has been rendered, "Spectacle of the sea;" but nothing turns upon the meaning of the word.

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Mary, that is to say, the holy Church and her Son, and her spotless husband, because to him is glory for ever. Amen." *

Cardinal Bellarmin † seems not to have been at all aware of the existence of such a homily.‡

APPENDIX F.

"THE ACTS OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT."

THE Author did not originally intend to refer to this work. It has, however, been cited in evidence as a "remarkable monument" of the worship of the Virgin Mary in the fourth century; and its character has been very recently defended by supporters of that worship.

The testimony of this brief and insulated production (the Latin translation of which occupies only seven folio pages) is thus quoted with apparently implicit confidence in its character. §

"A remarkable monument of most confident supplication made to the Blessed Virgin, and that too in the presence of, and suggested by, her image, we have in *The Acts of St. Mary of Egypt.* The Bollandists ||

* Vol. vi. p. 358. † Vol. vii. p. 50.

‡ See Concilii Ephesini Acta; Ingolstad. 1576. Concilia Generalia; Florence, 1761, vols. iv and v.

§ Dr. Wiseman's Remarks on Mr. Palmer's Letter. London, 1841, p. 26.

|| Dr. Wiseman refers to the treatise on "The Life" or "Acts of Mary," as though it were the joint work of many; it is in reality, however, the production only of one, who speaks of himself in the first person singular.—See Acta Sanctorum, tom. i. April 2, p. 68.

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have proved that her conversion, the effect of that prayer, took place about the year 383, and that the *Acts* themselves cannot have been composed later than 500. We are there told by herself, that, unable to enter the Church of Jerusalem on the festival of the Holy Cross, in deep distress of mind, looking up, she beheld a figure of the Blessed Virgin, and, fixing her eyes upon it, she spoke these words: 'Lady Virgin, I know myself to be unworthy to look up to an image of thee most pure; *help me in my distress*, and *without assistance, command* that entrance be permitted me, &c., that I may venerate the divine cross.' It would be too long here to quote all that follows, and therefore I throw some of it into a note. How similar is the language of the fourth century to that now reprobated so harshly in the Catholic Church after a lapse of fourteen centuries!"

The points here stated by Dr. Wiseman to be proved are two: first, that Mary of Egypt was converted in consequence of her prayer to the Virgin about the year 383; and, secondly, that the work called "the Acts of St. Mary of Egypt" cannot have been composed later than A.D. 500. Into the nature and validity of that proof we will now inquire; but it may be well briefly to state the contents of the work itself.

An Egyptian girl, at the tender age of twelve years, discarding the affection of her father and mother, and deserting their roof, went to live in the city of Alexandria, where she immediately entered upon a life of the most abandoned profligacy, too dreadful, she says, to be told. Having persevered in confirmed habits of unceasing dissoluteness for full seventeen years, on one summer's day she saw large crowds of

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people flocking towards the shore; and, on asking what it meant, she found that they were on the point of embarking for Jerusalem, to be present at the solemnity of elevating the holy Cross. She immediately resolved to join the party, and, throwing away her distaff, she ran to the sea; but she had no money to pay her passage or to procure provisions. After some disappointment, she found a knot of fine young men, full of mirth and laughter, ten or more in number, on whom she prevailed to take her with them. The transactions of that voyage and journey, she says, were too shocking for religious and moral ears to hear. At length reaching Jerusalem, for some days she carried on her wicked practices. Then, on the day of the solemnity, she approached the church, seeking what young men she might allure into her snare; but, when she came in the midst of the thronging crowd, she was not suffered to enter, but was constantly pushed and pulled back by some invisible power. At length she gave over the attempt, and withdrew; and, in much agony of mind, seeing a representation of the Virgin Mary in the court, she addressed to her a long prayer, promising never to return to her evil ways, and invoking the Virgin to cause her to be admitted. She then returned to the church, and no longer found any difficulty of entrance, but was gratified by witnessing the exaltation of the Cross. She then addressed to the Virgin a prayer, promising to devote her life to her, and asking for her guidance. On leaving the church, a person put three pieces of money into her hand, saying, "Mother, take this."

Having heard a voice which said, "If you will cross the Jordan, you shall find rest," she forthwith went to a baker's shop and bought three loaves, and en-

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quired of him the way. This was about the third hour; and, reaching the Jordan by night, she received the holy Communion in the Church of Christ's forerunner. Here she ate half a loaf, and slept; and next morning crossed the river in a boat which she found on the bank. She then made for the wilderness; the bread became dry, and was all soon consumed. Her clothes, also, wore away; and in the wilderness she lived in the open air without any lodging, without any clothing, and without any food beyond the herbs and such other things as she could find in the desert. The first seventeen years of this life she passed in constant and violent struggles against her unbridled and wild passions, which raged like untamed wild beasts, and in praying always to the Virgin to deliver her from her temptations. After the lapse of these seventeen years of conflict she discerned a bright light shining all around her, and from that moment she was tempted no more. Still she continued for full thirty years longer in the same wilderness, houseless and naked, and without any food, but feeding inwardly on the word of God, and being clothed by it. Through the whole of this space of forty-seven years she had seen neither the face of a human being, nor a wild beast, nor any other animal; but, at that time, her solitude was interrupted.

In Palestine, on the west of the Jordan, was a monastery, the monks of which were in the habit of passing some portion of Lent in the wilderness, separated from each other, and returning always before Palm Sunday. One of them, named Zosimas, who had lived in a monastery for fifty-three years, in his wanderings, whilst engaged in prayer, was suddenly arrested by the appearance of an ema-

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ciated naked figure, with black skin as if from the heat of the sun, and hair like wool, who turned hastily from him and retreated towards the interior of the desert; he, forgetting his advanced age, ran after her with all speed, and gaining ground upon her, (she being seventy-four years of age,) after great exertion finding himself at length within hearing, prayed the fugitive not to fly from an aged sinner like him. She, however, ran down a sort of water-course, and mounted the other side; then she stopped, and, telling him that she was a woman, prayed him to throw off his cloak that she might cover her person with it. He did so. After joining in prayer, he earnestly besought her to tell him her history; but she first inquired of him what was going on in the Christian world, what the KINGS WERE DOING, and how the Church was governed. He replied to her, "By your prayers, mother, God has given settled PEACE AND QUIETNESS TO THE CHURCH." She then prayed, and he afterwards swore, calling God to witness, that he saw her suspended in the air a cubit from the earth. He implored her then to tell him her whole history, which she did, having besought him never to cease praying for her, and conjuring him not to tell it to any one before her death. Afterwards she urges him to go away, and promises that he should see her the next year; she charges him, however, not to cross the Jordan at the usual time, but to wait in the monastery till the Thursday preceding Good Friday, and then to come to the west side of Jordan and to tarry there for her, bringing with him the consecrated elements, that he might administer the holy Communion to her. They then parted, he having first adored the ground on which she stood.

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He remained in the convent without divulging the matter to any one: and when the week in Lent came round in which it was usual for the monks to leave the convent, he found that a slight fever would have detained him had he desired to go. But on the day appointed, having taken a small cup (parvum poculum) of the consecrated elements, he sate on the banks of Jordan waiting for her; and when night had set in (it being a bright full-moon) he perceived Mary on the other side, but doubted how she could get over. Soon, however, he saw her making the sign of the cross upon the waters, and then walking over upon their surface, as if it had been on dry ground. On this occasion, she, having given him the usual kiss of peace, and received the Communion from his hands, repeated part of the Song of Simeon, and then bade him return to his home. She told him, however, to come the next year to the watercourse, where he first met her. Having taken three grains on the tip of her finger from his basket of provisions, saying, the grace of God was sufficient to keep the soul pure, she recrossed the Jordan, walking upon the waters as before.

The next year Zosimas went into the desert at the set time, and at length found Mary a corpse, stretched on the ground; and, having kissed her feet, he thought within himself whether it would be agreeable to her that he should bury her. On looking round, he saw these words written on the ground: "Zosimas, bury in this place the humble Mary, restore earth to earth; but pray the Lord for me as the ninth day is passing of the month Parmuthi, according to the Egyptians;* which is, according to the Romans,

* This is the Latin version.

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April; that is, the fifth of the Ides of April, on the night of the Passion which brings salvation, after receiving the divine and holy Supper."

On discovering this writing, Zosimas took a stick, and attempted to dig a grave with it; but the stick was dry and rotten, and it broke: when, lifting up his eyes, he saw a lion standing by the corpse and licking her footsteps; which surprised him the more, because Mary had never seen any wild beast there. The lion seemed not inclined to injure Zosimas; on the contrary, by a motion he saluted him, and shewed himself willing to assist him, and then Zosimas addressed him thus: "O lion, you can much assist me in digging this grave with your claws." On which the lion scratched the grave, into which Zosimas laid the body, wrapped up in the cloak which he had given her at their first interview. The lion withdrew into the desert, and Zosimas returned to his convent, and told his superior and brethren. Mary had at first charged Zosimas to warn his superior that some irregularities were going on in his convent, which he, on inquiry, found to be true; thus verifying Mary's words, and proving her to have been inspired! The monks preserved the remembrance of these things, and delivered down the story by oral tradition, till after the death of Zosimas, in about the hundredth year of his age.

Some time after, the writer of the Acts of Mary, whoever he was, not finding that the history had ever been committed to writing, composed the book which is the subject of our present inquiry.

We need not here dwell either upon the character of the story itself, or upon the insufficiency of oral tradition for the correct transmission through so many years of the very words used, because the credibility of the

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story is in reality not the point at issue. For, however incredible the legend may be deemed, yet, if the work called "The Acts of Mary," was composed before A. D. 500, as the Bollandist is said to have proved, it would be evidence that the offering of prayers to the Virgin, such as are sought to be now justified by the alleged practice of the primitive Church, was at that time known as an established custom. We will now, therefore, inquire into the nature of that proof.

The theory of the Bollandist is this:

That the conversion of the Egyptian penitent took place about A. D. 383; that her death, forty-eight years afterwards, happened in 431; that Zosimas outlived her twenty years or more; that the monks preserved her history by word of mouth for thirty years or more after his death; that the author of the Acts then recorded it before A.D. 500.

The Bollandist is said to have proved, that her conversion, the effect of her prayer to the Virgin, took place about A.D. 383. Now, the foundation on which he builds his argument are the questions put by Mary, and the answer made by Zosimas at their first meeting; and it is essential to that proof, not that the substance only of her question, but the very words, nay, the very number of the noun and of the verb used, should have been remembered by Zosimas, and reported without change to the monks, and preserved accurately by them, and received by the author, and recorded in his history, without any alteration; and also, that the answer made by Zosimas of necessity implies what the Bollandist attaches to it.

Mary requests Zosimas to acquaint her with what was going on in the world. The question which, as the Bollandist says, fixes the time before which her

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conversion could not have taken place, is this: "What are the kings doing?" This, he says, of necessity implies that the question was asked by one who had left the world for solitude, after the death of the Emperor Constantine, and at a time when more than one emperor possessed the sovereignty. She does not say, "What is the king doing?" but "What are the kings doing?"

But she asks also as to the state of the Church and the world; and the answer of Zosimas, informing her that God had, through her prayers, given lasting peace, is represented as implying that her death could not have taken place at the time when the Church was distracted by heresies, nor when the seas were infested by pirates, and the roads with robbers, as they were in after-days; otherwise, such large numbers would not have ventured to cross the seas, and take their journey to Jerusalem.

But in the writing on the earth, which requested Zosimas to bury her corpse, she also enjoined him to pray for her on Good Friday, the day she died; that day, as the Bollandist resolves, falling in the year of her death on the first of April. This, says the Bollandist, will enable us, without difficulty, to determine the time of her death. For between the year 348, which must be too early, and the year 511, which must (as he assumes) be too late, (in both of which years Good Friday happened on the first of April,) only two years occur when Good Friday happened on the same day, viz. 432 and 421, on one of which, consequently, her death must have taken place. The first is preferred, when peace generally prevailed. Thus she would have been converted about 383, fifty-eight years from the elevation of the cross by Constantine. This would allow of

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Zosimas outliving Mary full thirty years, and the story might well have been preserved, though unwritten yet, in the mouth of the monks for twenty or thirty years after his death, and thus the history might have been composed about 480, and the historian might truly say he wrote what happened in his time. The Bollandist supposes, that, on the publication of this history to the world, search would immediately be made for her body, and her relics would be sent to Rome.

The reader will observe, that all this reasoning is built on certain assumed facts and dates, any one of which being removed, the reasoning falls to the ground; whilst to any person acquainted with the history of those times, many occasions will occur on which the answer of Zosimas would have been as appropriate, at least, as it could have been in the supposed year 420 or 432.

But a most serious difficulty was here to be encountered by the Bollandist, in fixing upon the first day of April as the day of her death; for the Latin copies distinctly say, that the day of her death was the ninth of April, not the first. This would upset the whole argument: but the Bollandist says that the Greeks were more likely to know, as she was a Greek saint; yet many of the Greek MSS. specify no date at all. And in a Latin MS.* in the British Museum, of the 13th century, the date of the month is altogether omitted, and the only words said to have been written on the ground are these: "Father Zozimas, bury in this place the little corpse of the wretched Mary, — restore to the earth its own dust; and pray for me to the Lord by whose command you were sent. In the month of

* Harleian MS., 2800.

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April I am taken to heaven." So utterly worthless is any argument built upon the supposed day of her death!

The Bollandist, moreover, states that even "April 1st" was not in the original sentence written by Mary on the ground, but was added by the historian, or some other, for explanation; and that the Latin interpreter officiously and wrongly substituted April 9th; and, in the copy which the Bollandist gives us of the translation of the work, he omits all the words which specify the day. Moreover, the whole of his reasoning is built on the supposition that Mary died on the first of April, and that the first of April was also the first of the Egyptian month Parmuthi. Whereas, on the contrary, the first of Parmuthi was the 27th of March, and the first of April was the sixth of Parmuthi;* and the Oxford Greek MSS. most distinctly say, "In the month of Parmuthi, on the first."

But the more important question is as to the time at which the work was composed. The Bollandist is said to have proved that it could not have been composed later than A. D. 500. His argument is no other than this. In the year 518, Eleutherius, as an ancient history reports, going to Rome, received as a present from Hormisda, the Pope, certain relics of St. Mary of Egypt, and the head is specified (p. 71), which, together with the shoulder of St. Stephen the Protomartyr, he carried with him to Tournay; but the Bollandist says, that in the work in question, no mention is made of her bones having been then exhumed: consequently the exhumation, he argues, must have

* "Rudimenta Linguæ Coptæ, ad usum Collegii Urbani de propagandâ fide." Rome, 1778, p. 396. "L'Art de vérifier les Dates," tom. i. Paris, 1783, p. xx.

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taken place between the time of writing that book, and A. D. 518; therefore, it is proved that the work could not have been composed after the year 500!

But, supposing the reasoning on these supposed facts to be valid here, there is this extraordinary and conflicting fact recorded by Paulus Æmilius, an Abbot, and afterwards Archbishop of Urbino, that, in the year One thousand and fifty-nine, Luke, Abbot of a monastery at Carbona, in Calabria, in his visit to the Holy Land, searched for and found Mary's grave, and brought the BODY from Palestine: a priest, however, stole THE HEAD, and sold it to the nuns of St. Mary of Egypt, for their church at Naples; and Franciscus Gonzaga says, that though "it had no letters testimonial," yet the number of miracles wrought by that relic recommended it, and indicated that it was the real head of "*the glorious sinner.*"* If Luke exhumed the body in 1059, what confidence can be placed in an argument built on the tradition that Pope Hormisda gave part of Mary's body to Eleutherius in 518? The Bollan-

* Gonzaga tells us that the head was exhibited on the altar from the vespers of her feast to sunset on her octave. He says he needs only specify one miracle, and it is this: The officer whose duty it was to offer incense about the head, said within himself, "Perhaps, after all, this is not the head of St. Mary of Egypt;" on which he was seized with great agony. But the nuns' confessor, coming in, cried out, "I most firmly believe this to be the head of St. Mary of Egypt;" and he gave to the incredulous officer a drink of water, which he had expressly for the purpose poured into it. No sooner had he swallowed the draught than he was restored, and confessed his want of faith; and from that time, says Gonzaga, the relic was held in still greater honour. Though the head was, according to one account, taken by Eleutherius to Tournay in 518, and, according to another, was in 1059 sold to the nuns of Carbona, yet the Bollandist tells us that there was a great dispute between the people of Cremona and Carbona, as to which of the two had the greater share of Mary's relics.

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dist supposes that the monks may have originally taken only a small portion of the remains and sent them to Rome, leaving the rest in the tomb. This statement of the archbishop invalidates the argument on which the date of the composition is said to be proved to have taken place before A.D. 500.

Dynamius Patricius, however, Rector of the Patrimony of the Roman Church in Gaul, who died in 598, is cited to prove that the history of Mary was known in that country at a very early date. Supposing the work to be genuine, he speaks nothing of the Acts or the Life of Mary, as the Bollandist represents him to have spoken; but only gives two instances of a wild beast having assisted at the grave of a holy person; one of which is Mary of Egypt, the other being Paul the first hermit.*

While the Bollandist builds his theory on mere assumptions, and cannot, as he confesses, offer any conjecture as to the authorship of the work in question, other testimony claims attention. Nicephorus Callistus,† who lived towards the end of the thir-

* The Author does not intend to give an opinion as to the genuineness of this work. Petrus de Natalibus could not find any manuscript of it; the only copy known is that from which the Bollandist says he derived his information. The story in the Life of Marius is this: "At another time, when he was going to visit some sons of the Church, a bitch with whelps suddenly springing at him tore his satchel. But as this servant of God bent down his face for a little while at this, two wolves, revengers of the injury, seized the bitch, and destining it for their own food carried it to the wood, as the people witnessed. But if any one does not believe that sometimes the beasts of the forest, laying aside their savageness, have known how to minister to the benefit of the righteous, let him hear that lions made the grave of Paul the first hermit, and of St. Mary of Egypt; let him hear, and in all praise God, and wonder, and believe."

† Vol. ii. p. 738, lib. xvii. c. 5.

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teenth century, is the first writer known to have mentioned the "Life of Mary of Egypt" as a work; and in his history, having given a succinct account of the story just as we now find it, he distinctly ascribes it, with commendations, to Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, as its author. In this work Callistus says nothing of the time at which the Life was composed, nor does he allude to Andrew of Crete, or any other as contemporary with Sophronius. But the Bollandist says that Callistus, in another work ascribed to him, called Synaxaria, &c., when speaking of Andrew, Archbishop of Crete, asserts that Andrew wrote his Great Canon at the time when Sophronius wrote his Life of Mary of Egypt, and that he carried them both with him to the Sixth Council at Constantinople, A. D. 680. This, the Bollandist says, involves an anachronism: and at the same time he assures us, that he found in that account of Callistus more errors than periods.

But supposing that historian, in another independent work ascribed to him, in which he speaks only incidentally of Sophronius, and of the Life of Mary, to have fallen into a mistake as to the time at which Sophronius composed that memoir, or Andrew composed his Great Canon, that cannot invalidate the positive and direct declaration in his history as to the authorship of the Life of Mary, of which he was then writing. And certain it is, and the Bollandist does not deny the fact, that Sophronius is the writer to whom the work is ascribed in different Greek manuscripts, while no manuscript whatever, Greek or Latin, refers it to any other author. In the Bodleian Library we have three Greek manuscripts* of this

* MS. Baroc. cxcvii. f. 321–6; MS. Cromwell. vi. f. 71; MS. Laud. Gr. xxx. ad calcem.

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"Life of St. Mary of Egypt;" which are of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; and in every one of them the "Life" is ascribed distinctly to Sophronius, Archbishop of Jerusalem. Surius* considers the Latin translation which he had adopted, as superior to many others. He took it from a very ancient manuscript, the title of which was "The Life of Mary of Egypt, the author being among the Greeks Sophronius, Bishop of Jerusalem; and translated by Paul, the Deacon of the Church of Naples;" while Coccius, who cites every passage which he can make to bear on the worship of the Virgin, quotes this work as the production of Sophronius, Bishop of Jerusalem, and assigns to it the date of 630.

A review of this dissertation will, it is believed, convince any unprejudiced mind, that, so far from the Bollandist having PROVED the Egyptian penitent's conversion to have been about A.D. 383, there is not one particle of solidity in his argument; resting, as it does, upon assumed premises, and gratuitous suppositions, and met as it is by antagonist facts and arguments at every step: and so far from his having PROVED that the work was written before A.D. 500, his only asserted fact to establish that point is contradicted point-blank by, at least, an equally authentic story. The first writer who mentions "The Acts," or "The Life," ascribes it to Sophronius, who lived towards the close of the seventh century: various manuscripts of the work bear his name as its author; and it has never been ascribed to any other.

* Vol. ii. p. 186. Venice, 1581.

THE END.

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